SPECIAL EDITION 2016

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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THE PLANT ISSUE

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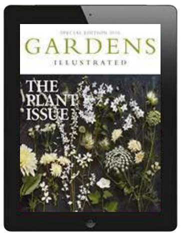
editor's letter

For many of us it's a love affair with an individual plant or plant combination that starts off our passion for gardening. A couple of years ago, at a *Gardens Illustrated* Talk, renowned designer Piet Oudolf, reflecting on his career, revealed: "I used to be obsessed by plants; now I'm insanely obsessed by plants." I don't think he's alone in this sentiment and while we try to fit in as much useful plant information as possible into our regular issues that run from January to December, for this, our Plant Special, we pull out all the stops plant-wise. Head gardener Fergus Garrett discusses his choices for the exotic garden at Great Dixter; expert grower John Hoyland explains the success behind nurserywoman Fleur van Zonneveld's carefully constructed planting combinations for container displays; Francine Raymond visits cut-flower expert, gardener and florist James Horner; we take a look at Piet Oudolf's use of annuals for his latest design at a gallery in the Netherlands; and Lia Leendertz goes behind the scenes at a community salad growing project near Bristol. I've been a keen vegetable grower for over two decades and looking back I realise that my first plant love was a broad bean that I grew from seed for a biology experiment at school. Every day I would check its progress, and I can still remember the excitement of watching its roots and stem emerging, pressing against the side of the jam jar in which it grew. My fascination with plants deepens each year and I hope that you too enjoy learning about the people, plants and places that we choose to feature. Enjoy the issue.

Juliet



Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 22

Discover the secrets behind Great Dixter's Exotic Garden, page 44.

Find out how the Severn Project uses salad crops to help turn lives around, page 78.

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Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

ANNAICK GUITTENY, JASON INGRAM

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SPECIAL EDITION 2016

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CLAIRE TAKACS

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Photograph by
Andrew Montgomery

EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Find out who we have lined up to speak at the ***Gardens Illustrated*** **Festival 2017** – page 8
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DEVELOP A PASSION FOR PLANTING DESIGN

At the **London College of Garden Design** our aim is to provide **world-class, inspirational garden designing training.** Our new **Planting Design Diploma**, launched in 2015, was created to enable professionals to develop their passion for plants by working with some of the very best designers and plants people.

Through practical workshops, inspirational lectures and visits the **Planting Design Diploma** explores contemporary and traditional techniques to support and develop your planting design skills. This is a unique course not found anywhere else in Europe, delivered over 30 days from January to June from our home in the **Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew**.

The course is led by **Andrew Fisher Tomlin, designer and Chartered Horticulturist**, and we are fortunate to have **some incredible specialist lecturers** including Rosy Hardy, Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens, Tony Kirkham from the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** and Nigel Dunnett from the **University of Sheffield**. Designer tutors include James Basson, Jo Thompson, Paul Hervey-Brookes, Anne-Marie Powell, Carolyn Willitts and Amanda Patton.

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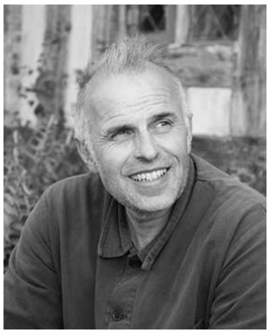

CAROL CASSELDEN

FERGUS GARRETT

Fergus has been head gardener of Great Dixter since 1993 and ensures the garden keeps changing constantly throughout the season by trying out new plants and plant combinations. On page 44 he explains what plants work best in Dixter's Exotic Garden.

"Plants when put with the right companions, have the extraordinary ability to transport you to another place."

ANDRÉ REUTER

German photographer André has a passion for gardens and country living, and his photographs are published in magazines around the world. André lives in northern Germany, an area renowned for its lily of the valley, and on page 62 he meets one of its growers.

"I was astonished to see how much work and how many different steps it takes to grow lily of the valley."

CRISTIAN BARNETT

Although Cristian specialises in photographing food, he also enjoys working with artists and gardeners. He believes the best kind of shoot is one where you learn something new – and, luckily, that still happens often. On page 34 he photographs textile artist Rachel Nettles.

"Rachel is just as bonkers as her work. I was convinced her textile vegetables were real when I first saw them."

CHARLIE COLMER

FRANCINE RAYMOND

Francine enjoys exploring the fringes of the gardening world. Floristry is halfway between art and craft, and there's a new breed of floral artists with a background in formal gardening growing their own. She meets the gardener, designer and florist James Horner on page 52.

"James Horner straddles the world of floristry and planting, growing and arranging blooms with great panache."

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DEADLINE 08TH JANUARY

Radicepura announces an international competition to select architects, landscapers, designers under 35 that will create 5 temporary gardens with the theme "Mediterranean Experiences".
The gardens can be any shape but must be no less than 30 sq meters and no more than a total of 50 sq meters and they will be created inside a Botanical Park situated between the Mount Etna and the Ionic Sea. They will communicate with art works and other gardens created by famous international garden designers.

Participation is free of charge and each selected project will receive a partial plant supply up to a sales value of euro 3.000 and a budget of euro 2.000 for the building of the garden. Participants will have the opportunity to choose the plants from Piante Faro greenhouses and cultivations, which means a production of over 800 species and more than 5,000 varieties of exotic, succulent and ornamental plants, rare trees, unique majestic thousand year old specimens.
The gardens will be realized by local gardeners according to the indications of the project and under the supervision of a local technical landscaper.

The deadline to send the applications on the website radicepurafestival.com is January 08th 2016.

The gardens will be judged by an international panel of experts chaired by Sarah Eberle. Five projects will be thus selected to realize the gardens. During the festival, a Best in Show and Best Planting awards will be announced.

Radicepura Garden Festival
Email applications@radicepurafestival.com
Tel +39 095 778 0562
Via Fogazzaro, N. 19 – 95014 Giarre (CT) Italia

radicepurafestival.com

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We are delighted to be hosting our second *Gardens Illustrated* Festival, which takes place on 25-26 March 2017 in the magnificent buildings and gardens of Westonbirt School, close to the Cotswold town of Tetbury.

Drawing together an exciting programme of speakers, the two days will be packed with discussions and discoveries, plus tours of the school's own gardens and others in the area.

Stepping out of the school buildings, on to the terraced lawns, you'll find our shopping marquee selling a carefully chosen selection of plants from specialist nurseries, and gardening goods from some of our favourite companies and artisan makers. There's also the opportunity to book a free session with one of our expert horticulturists and designers who can help answer your own garden queries at our plant and design clinics.

Book ahead and join us and get your gardening season off to a great start.

Speakers for 2017 include: James Alexander-Sinclair, Jinny Blom, Val Bourne, Helen Dillon, Nigel Dunnett, Marina Christopher, Annie Guilfoyle, Andy Hamilton, Mary Keen, Noël Kingsbury, Roy Lancaster, Arne Maynard, Jekka McVicar, Ann-Marie Powell, Sarah Raven, Tim Richardson, Charlie Ryrie, Troy Scott Smith, Tom Stuart-Smith, Cleve West

For booking and details of all events go to

gardensfestival.com or call 0871 230 7156

calls cost 13p per minute plus network extras. Lines open 24 hours a day.

BACKGROUND IMAGE: TETRA IMAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 2015 FESTIVAL IMAGES BY JASON INGRAM; PORTRAIT OF HELEN DILLON BY JANE SEBIRE

TOUR LEADER
David Wheeler is editor of the gardening journal *Hortus*, which he produces from his home and garden in Herefordshire. In 2009 he was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal from the RHS.

Denmark is topographically flat (max altitude 172m) but its numerous private and public gardens ride sky-high in any European or Scandinavian league of excellence. While a climate similar to Britain's implies the use of familiar plants, it's the manner in which these ornamentals are put together that distinguishes the country's little-known places of horticultural paradise.

For our specially arranged tour, we immediately dive into this diverse world by heading to the King's Gardens, a blissful oasis in Copenhagen. Adjacent lies the plant-rich, undulating landscape and curvaceous glasshouses of the Botanic Garden.

We stroll through the extensive baroque park at the royal palace, in contrast to its productive Prince Consort's kitchen garden and the Queen of Denmark's orangery. And there could be no better introduction to Denmark's individualism than Exillion, Peter Wibroe's Copenhagen house, remarkably remodelled to resemble a small French château, surrounded by an immaculately kept formal garden, spiced up with Peter's open-fronted Moorish hideaways, half hidden by lush vegetation.

Urban gardening reaches record heights at ØsterGro's city-centre, organic, roof-top, community garden, a calming refuge after an early bird visit to Tivoli, where head gardener Tom Knudsen has created a series of unlikely gardens of great beauty among the white-knuckle rides and lavish sideshows of the world's oldest amusement park.

The romantic landscape of Petersgaard Manor reflects the surrounding countryside, enlivened by grapevine walk, rose borders and magnificent trees. We include a candle-lit dinner set amid the sub-tropical plants of the 1870s 'English' conservatory, hosted by designers Greg Kobett and Stig Lauritsen. We cross the waters of the Wolf Strait to reach the artist-island of Møn, where plantsmen Hans Sattrup and Keld Nielsen share their highly esteemed farmland garden. There's also Marianne Follings' intriguingly complex perennial garden, the distinguished medicinal garden by 20th-century Danish designer Gudmund Brandt and a unique tomato, chilli and herb nursery where a delicious, freshly harvested, farewell lunch awaits.

Booking details

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,998 (single supplement of £300 will be levied by the hotels). The price includes: two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Copenhagen Admiral Hotel** where all rooms will have a harbour view in this stylish waterfront hotel and two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Hotel Frederiksminde**, a luxury hotel in a stately 1890 manor house just a step from the beach; four evening meals with wine; three lunches as well as return flights from London Heathrow.

For more information or to book please contact:
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Gwynedd LL45 2NT, UK. **Tel** +44 (0)1341 241717.
Email mail@boxwoodtours.co.uk **Website** boxwoodtours.co.uk

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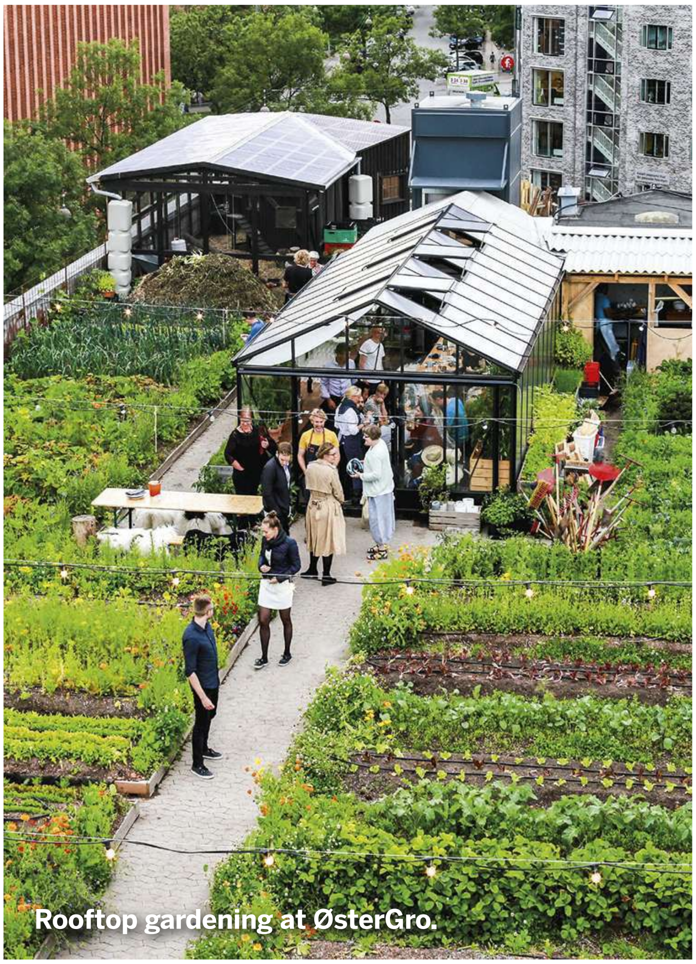
Formal gardens at Exillion.



Rooftop gardening at ØsterGro.

HENNING THOMSEN. TIVOLI IMAGE: JONATHAN BARSOOK

Made in Denmark

Gardens of Copenhagen and Zealand: 7-11 July 2017

Royal retreats, a hectic urban fun fair, specialist indoor botanical collections, a rooftop's edible cornucopia: there is much to excite the plantsman on our tour to discover Danish garden excellence and diversity, hosted by garden writer and editor David Wheeler and landscape architect Greg Kobett

The gardens at Tivoli in Copenhagen.

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10

hidden gems in the UK, where you'll find top-notch planting inspiration

WORDS **SORREL EVERTON**

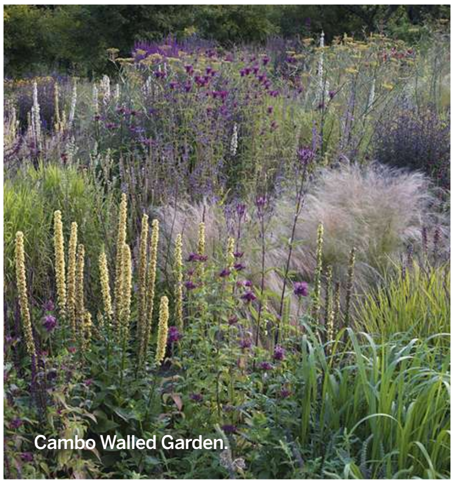
Gravetye Manor

Building on its heritage as the garden of innovative plantsman William Robinson (1838-1935), Gravetye Manor is now firmly back on track as a garden of exemplary plantsmanship. Head gardener Tom Coward has revitalised the borders, wildflower meadow and productive kitchen garden of this 25-acre hotel garden.

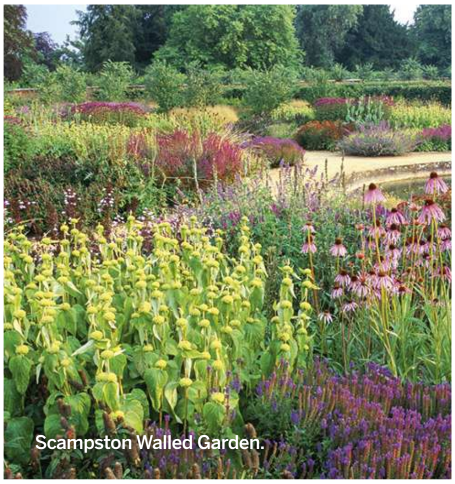
Address Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ.
Tel 01342 810567. **Web** gravetyemanor.co.uk
Open See website for access and open days.

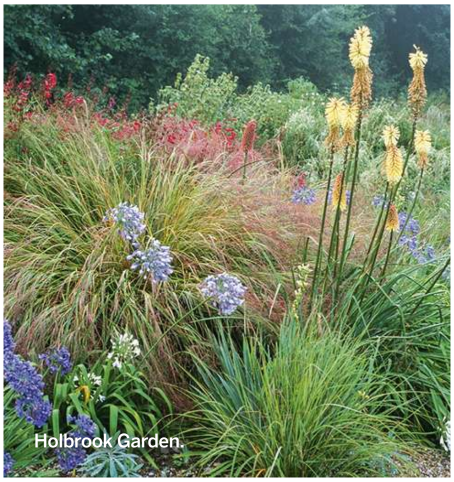
· Please check all opening details before setting out to visit any of the listed gardens.

LIST COMPILED WITH THE HELP OF NOËL KINGSBURY, STEPHANIE DONADSON AND JOHN HOYLAND. GRAVETYE MANOR.


Cambo Walled Garden.

Lady Farm Gardens.


Scampston Walled Garden.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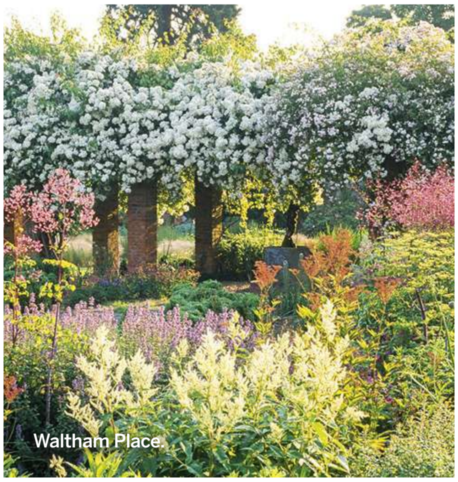
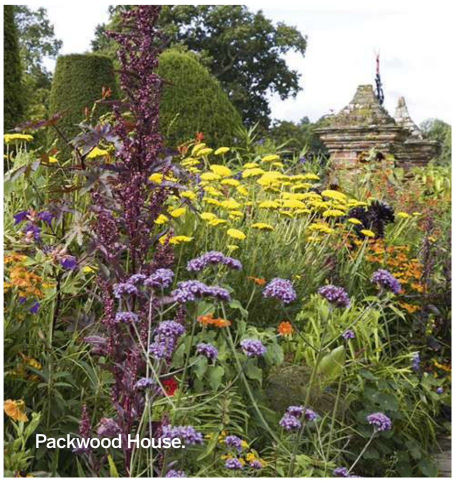

Waltham Place.


Packwood House.

Cambo Walled Garden

This historic 2.5-acre walled garden – with a burn running through the middle, spanned by three bridges – is planted with a naturalistic display of rare and interesting perennials. The garden also has a great array of snowdrops early in the season. An enchanting garden for plant enthusiasts, Cambo also hosts an Art of Naturalistic Planting design course.

Address Cambo House, Kingsbarns, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8QD.
Tel 01333 450054. **Web** camboestate.com
Open 10am-5pm, daily.

Lady Farm Gardens

This rural Somerset garden makes clever use of its varying conditions to create distinct areas. Of particular note are the prairie planting, stream-side ravine, shady hosta walk and lake edge. Lots of ideas for what can be achieved when making a garden from scratch – and also with low maintenance in mind.

Address Chelwood, Somerset BS39 4NN.
Tel 01761 490770. **Web** ladyfarm.com
Open Please see website for details.

Scampston Walled Garden

Back in 1999, Scampston's 18th-century walled garden was given a contemporary make-over by Dutch plant master Piet Oudolf. Yew, box, topiary, hedging and pleached limes, are used in a less formal way to define the serpentine plantings of well-chosen perennials.

Address Scampston Hall, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8NG.
Tel 01944 759111. **Web** scampston.co.uk
Open 10am-5pm, Tuesday-Sunday, Easter to October.

Holbrook Garden

Nurseryman Martin Hughes-Jones has focused his enthusiasm in a variety of experimental plantings, inspired by natural plant communities. The garden builds from delicate spring bulbs to bold tapestries of yellows, reds and purples in early autumn.

Address Samford Shrubs, Sampford Peverell, Tiverton, Devon EX16 7EN.
Tel 01884 821164. **Web** holbrookgarden.com
Open 10am-5pm, Wednesday-Friday. Easter to early September.

Waltham Place

Considered both inspirational and challenging, the gardens of Strilli Oppenheimer showcase her devotion to gardening in harmony with nature. Rich herbaceous plantings are intentionally linked with less commonly welcomed invaders, such as ground elder. Biodynamic principles extend to the kitchen garden, farm and estate.

Address Church Hill, White Waltham, Berkshire SL6 3JH.
Tel 01628 825517 **Web** walthamplace.com
Open By appointment and for NGS.

Packwood House

Here you'll find glorious, contemporary, 'mingled' planting set alongside historic topiary. Of particular note are the hot borders along the raised walkway, which reach an exuberant crescendo in late summer with clever combinations of hardy and tender perennials, thanks to the skill of head gardener Mick Evans and his team.

Address Packwood Lane, Lapworth, Warwickshire B94 6AT.
Tel 01564 782024. **Web** nationaltrust.org.uk

ABIGAIL REX / GAP PHOTOS / OWNER AND DESIGNER MRS J PEARCE ; JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS / DESIGN PIET OUDOLF; JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS / DESIGN MARTIN HUGHES-JONES;
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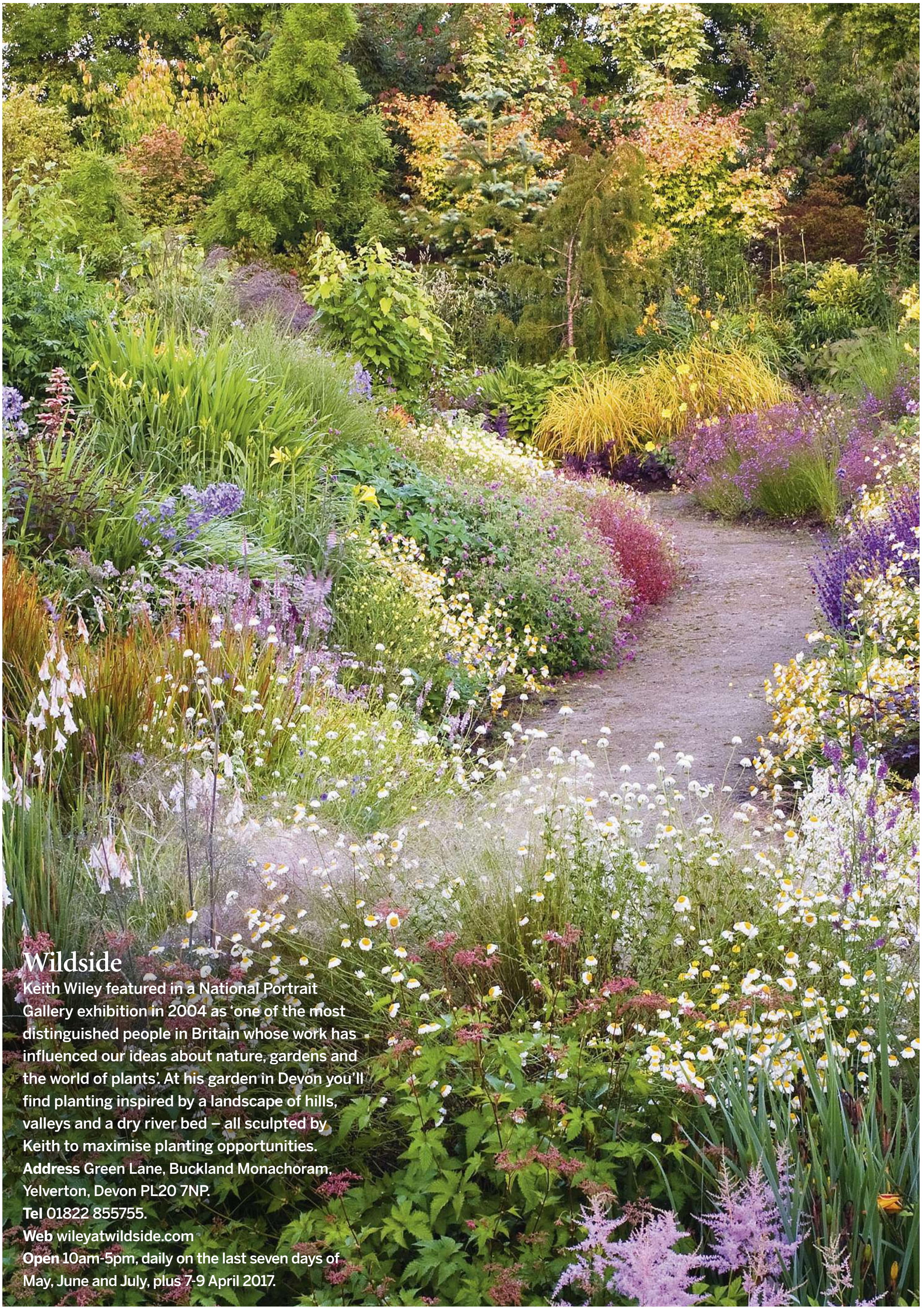

Wildside

Keith Wiley featured in a National Portrait Gallery exhibition in 2004 as 'one of the most distinguished people in Britain whose work has influenced our ideas about nature, gardens and the world of plants'. At his garden in Devon you'll find planting inspired by a landscape of hills, valleys and a dry river bed – all sculpted by Keith to maximise planting opportunities.

Address Green Lane, Buckland Monachoram, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7NP.

Tel 01822 855755.

Web wileyatwildside.com

Open 10am-5pm, daily on the last seven days of May, June and July, plus 7-9 April 2017.

RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS / DESIGN KEITH WILEY

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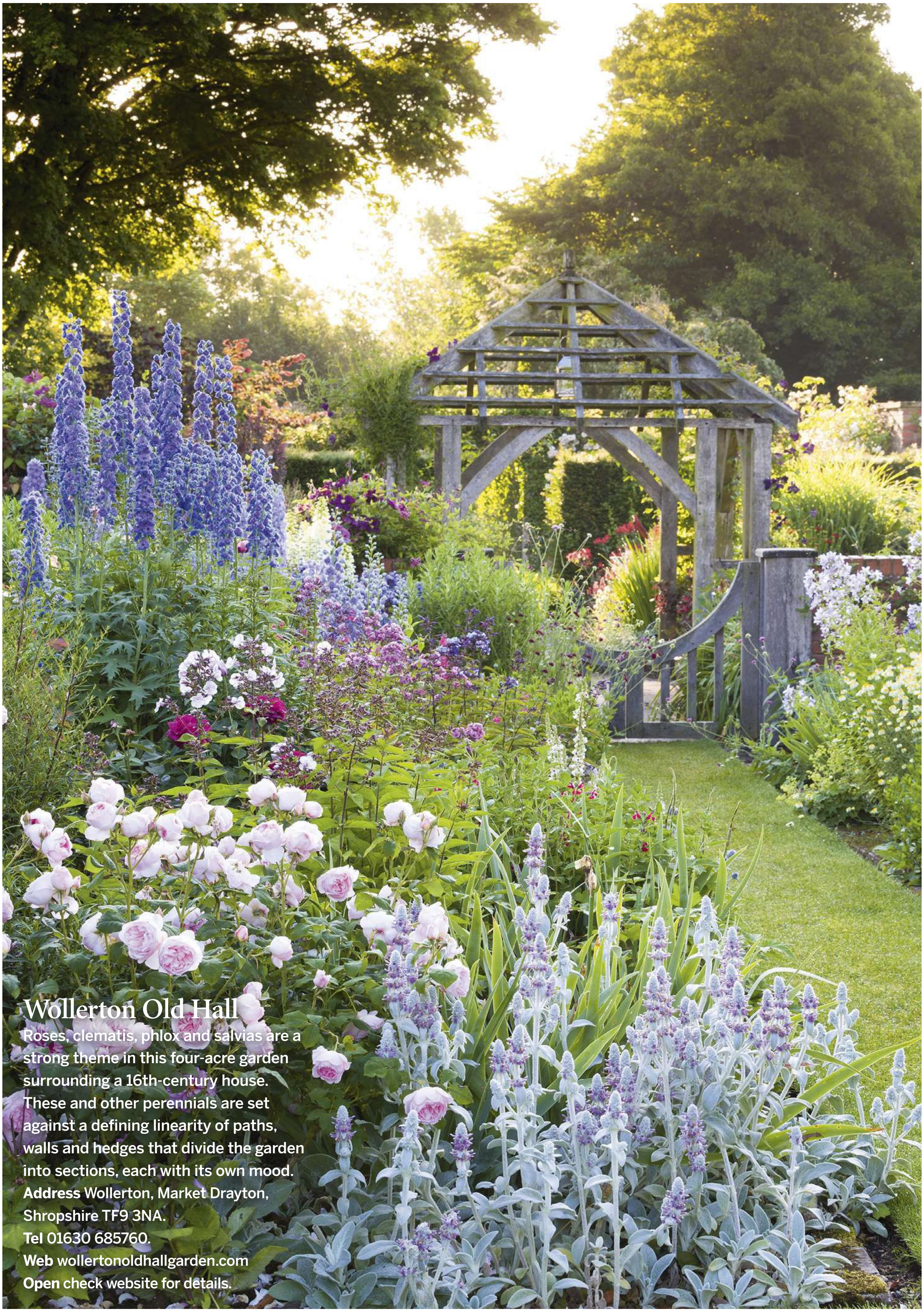

Wollerton Old Hall

Roses, clematis, phlox and salvias are a strong theme in this four-acre garden surrounding a 16th-century house. These and other perennials are set against a defining linearity of paths, walls and hedges that divide the garden into sections, each with its own mood.

Address Wollerton, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 3NA.
Tel 01630 685760.
Web wollertonoldhallgarden.com
Open check website for details.

JOE WAINWRIGHT / GAP PHOTOS / DESIGN JOHN AND LESLEY JENKINS GARDEN

Trentham Gardens

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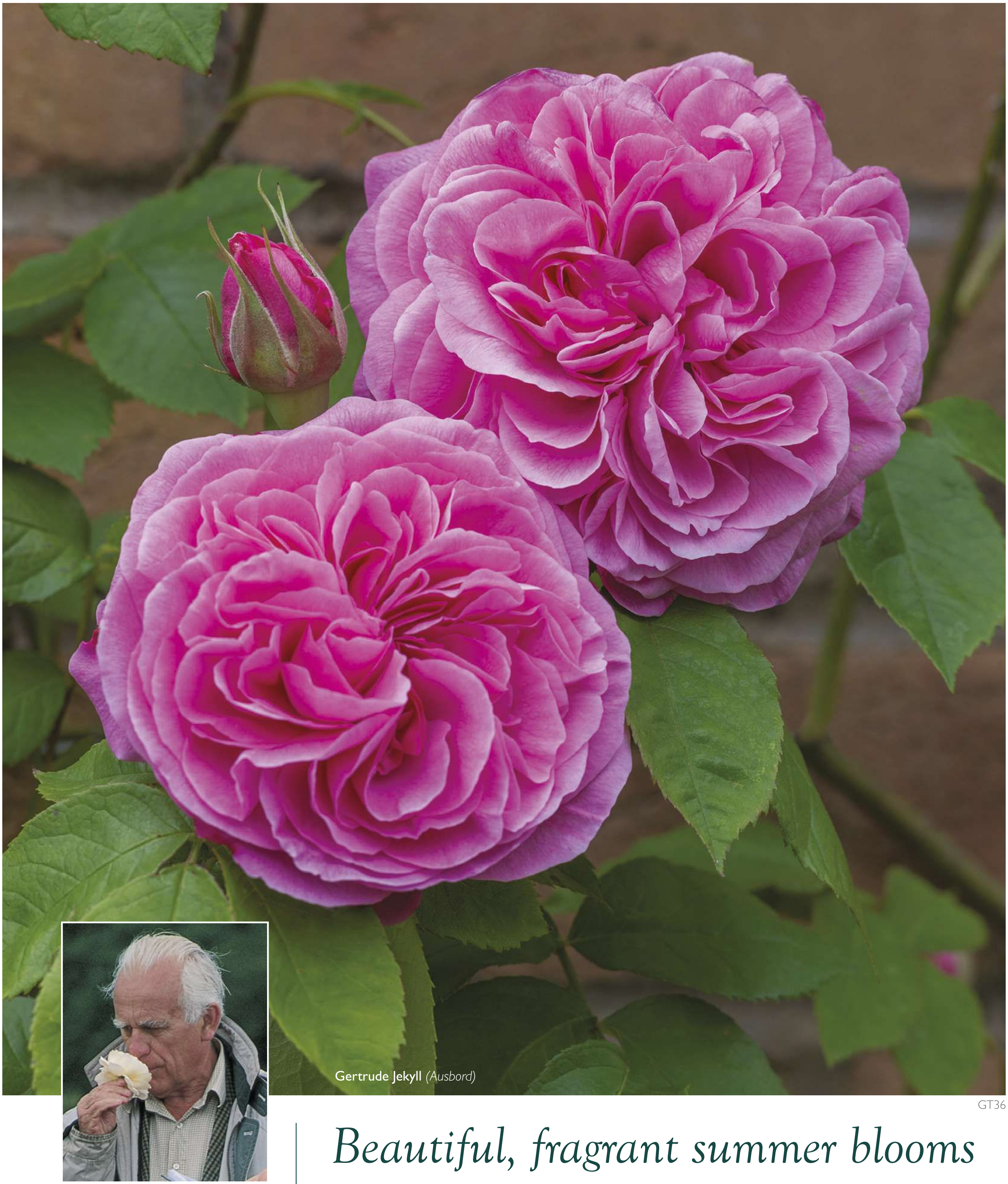

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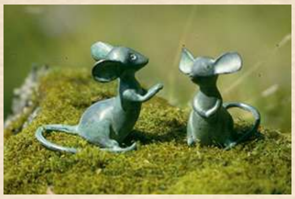
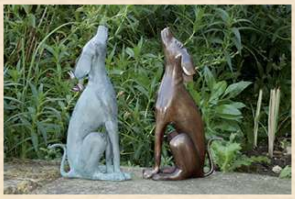
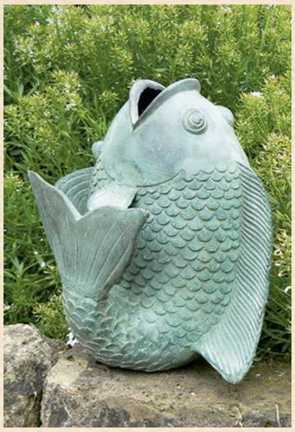


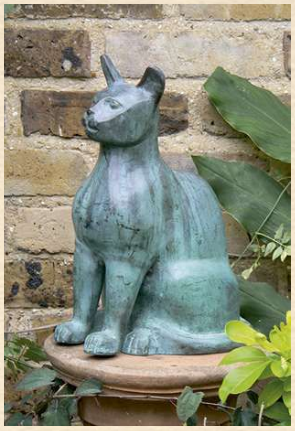
Pair of Mice 10 cms high



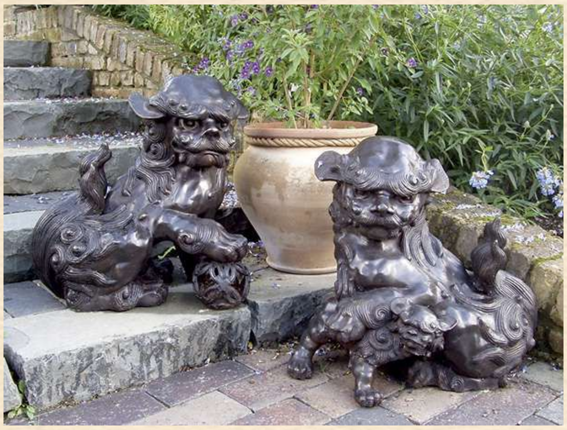
Moongazing Dogs 30 cms high



Fish Vase several sizes



Egyptian Cat 38 cms high



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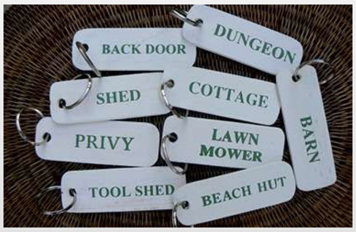
BACK DOOR
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BARN
TOOL SHED
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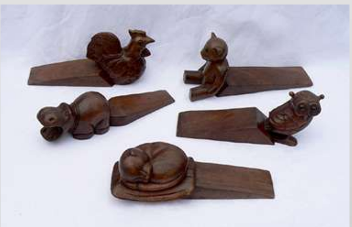
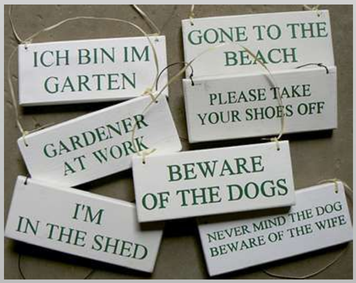
Wooden Keyrings : 95 Locations



Wooden Doorstops


ICH BIN IM GARTEN
GONE TO THE BEACH
PLEASE TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF
GARDENER AT WORK
BEWARE OF THE DOGS
I'M IN THE SHED
NEVER MIND THE DOG BEWARE OF THE WIFE

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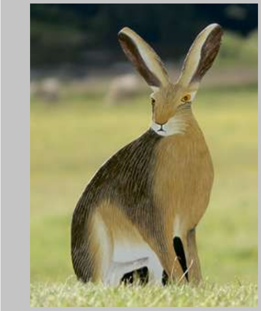
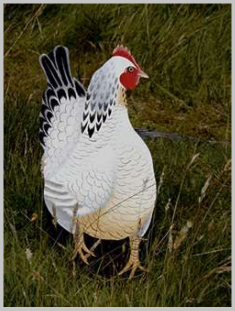
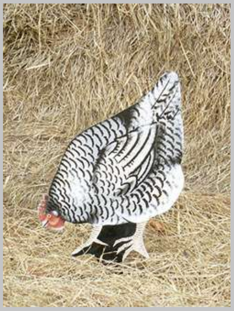
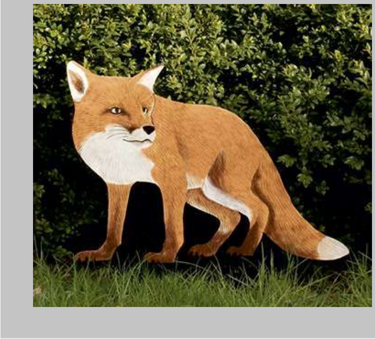
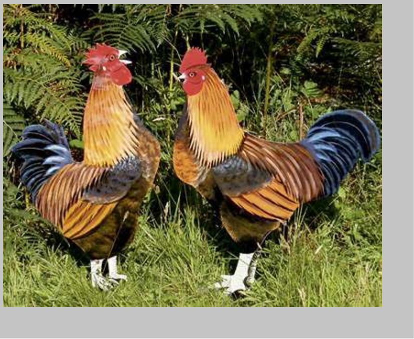
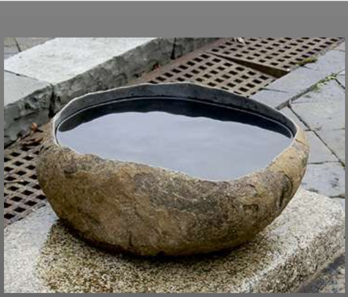




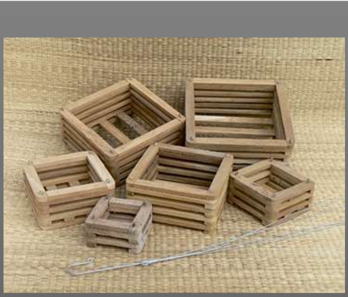








Stone Bowls



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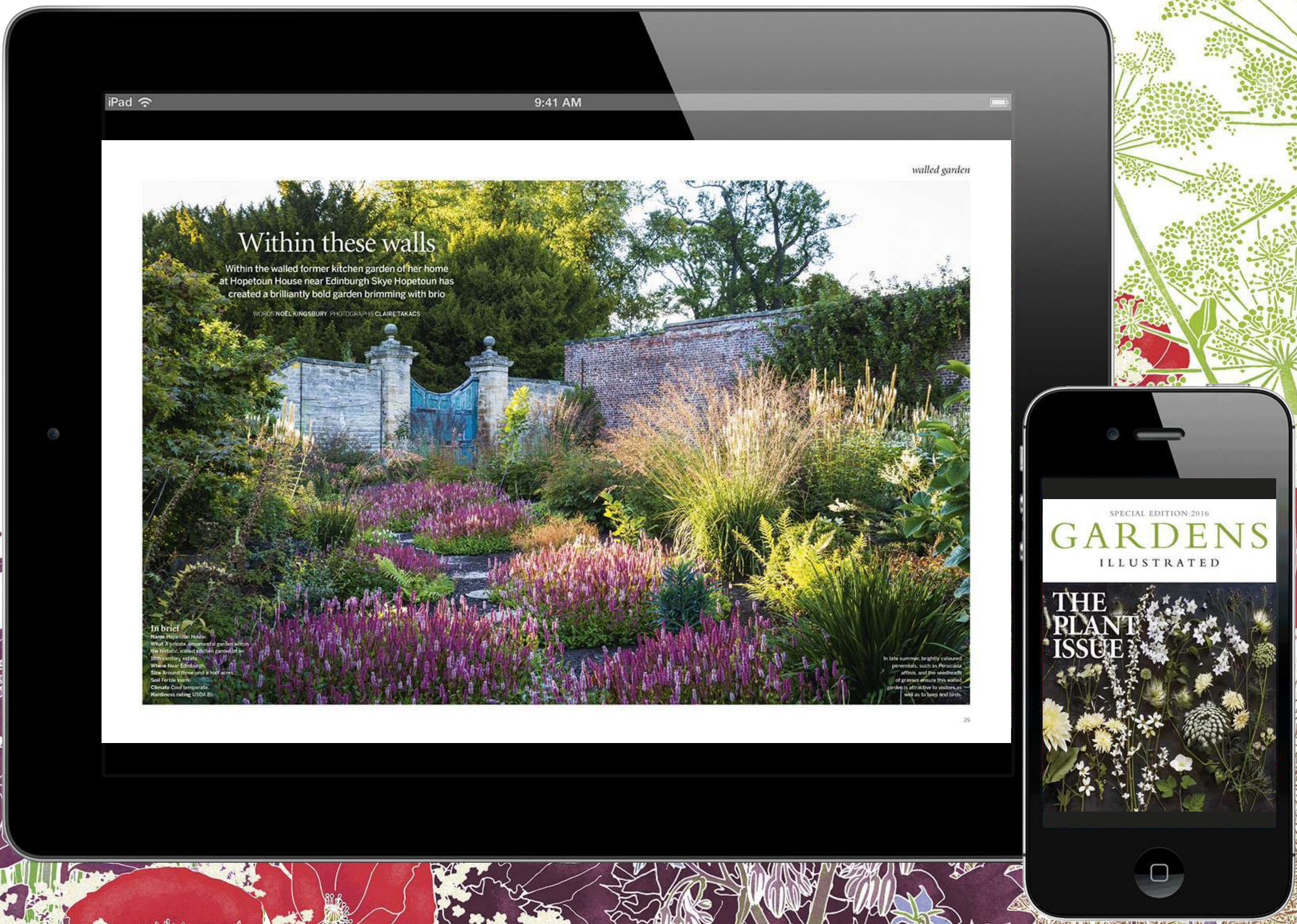
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walled garden

Within these walls

Within the walled former kitchen garden of her home at Hopetoun House near Edinburgh Skye Hopetoun has created a brilliantly bold garden brimming with brio

WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

In brief
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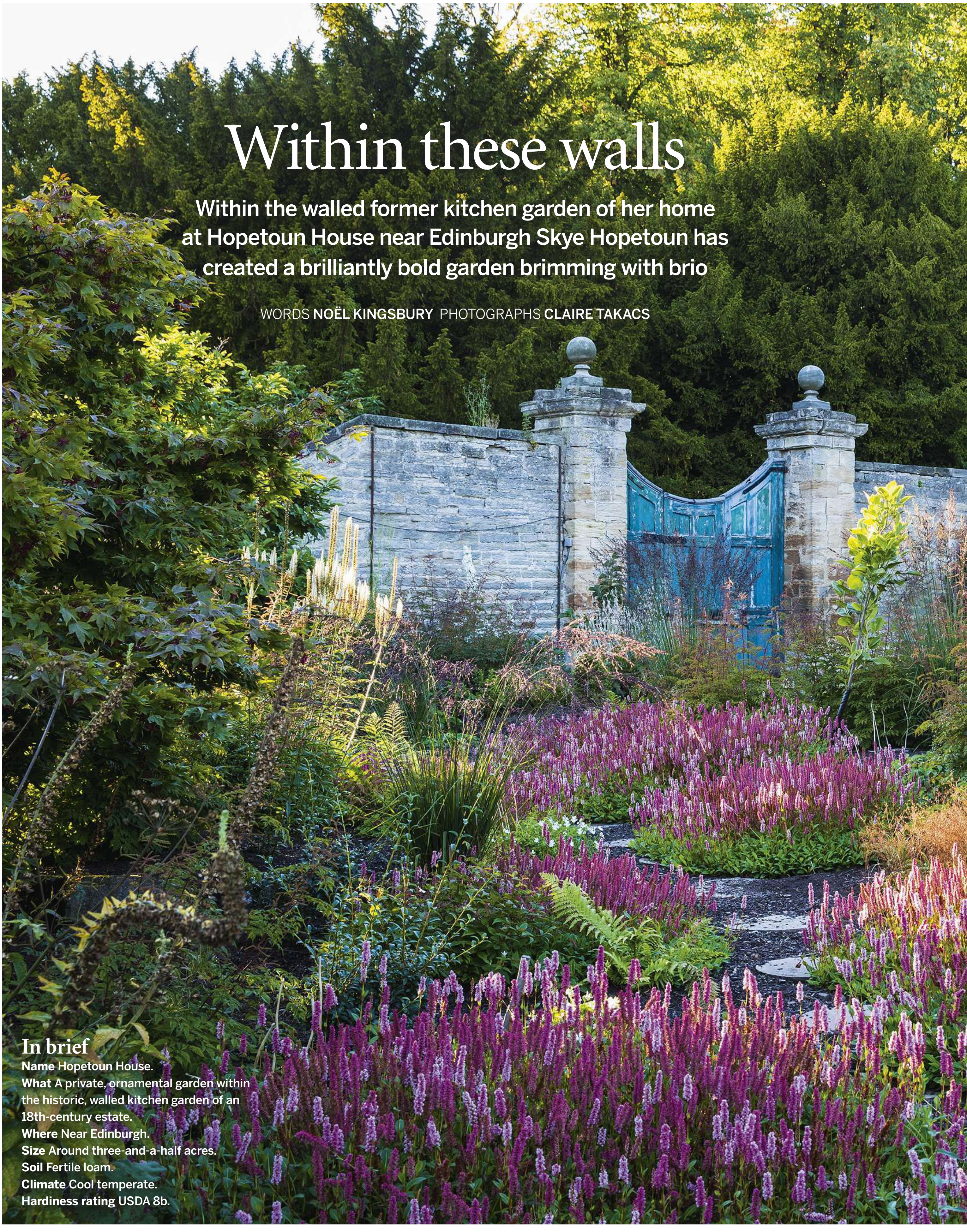


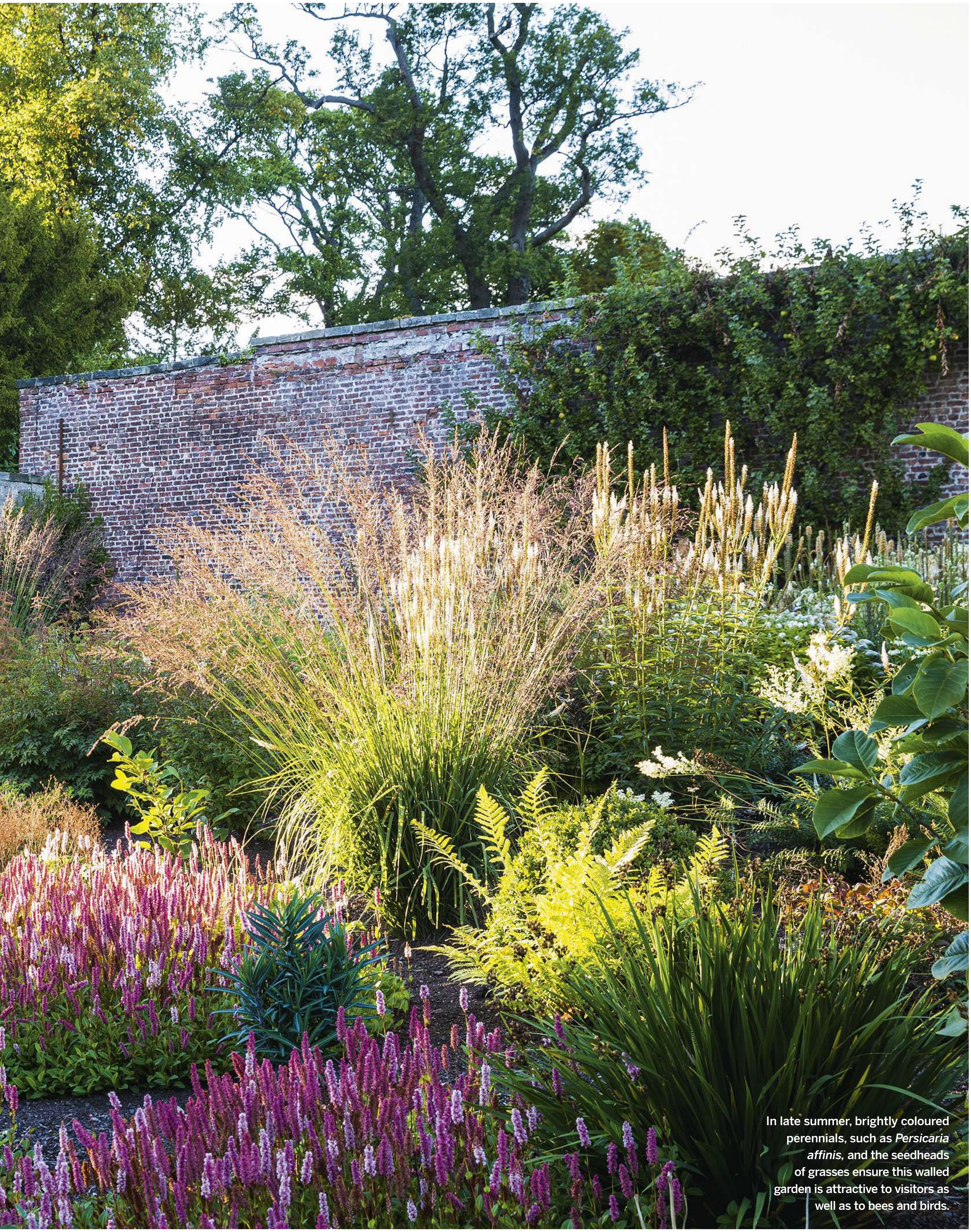
Within these walls

Within the walled former kitchen garden of her home at Hopetoun House near Edinburgh Skye Hopetoun has created a brilliantly bold garden brimming with brio

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**

In brief

Name Hopetoun House.
What A private, ornamental garden within the historic, walled kitchen garden of an 18th-century estate.
Where Near Edinburgh.
Size Around three-and-a-half acres.
Soil Fertile loam.
Climate Cool temperate.
Hardiness rating USDA 8b.

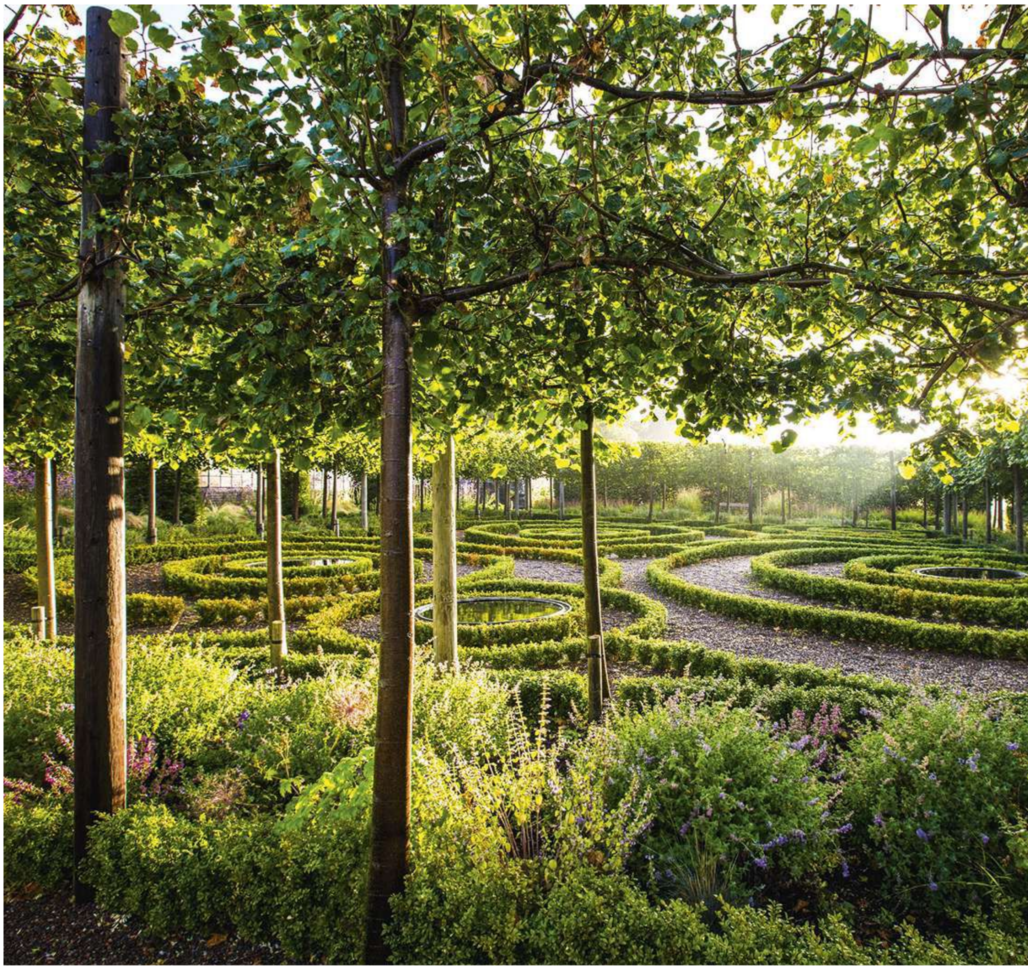


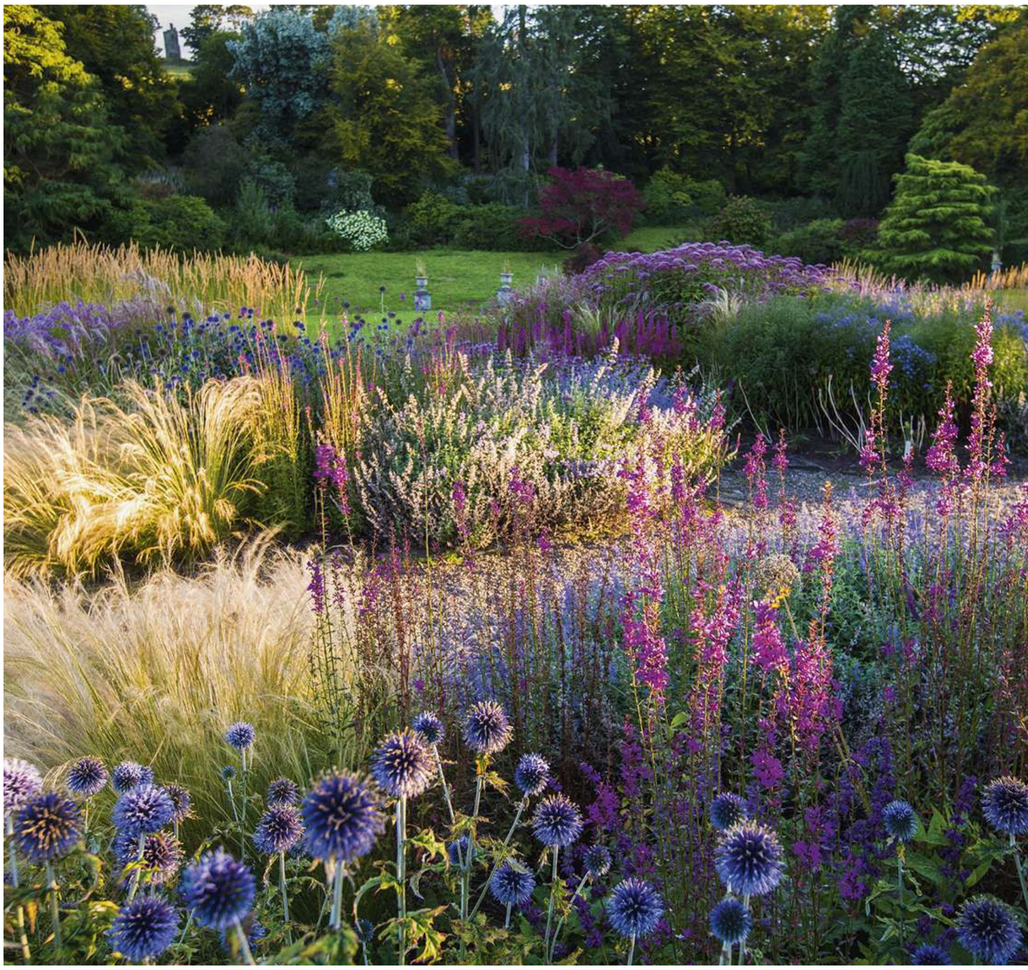
In late summer, brightly coloured perennials, such as *Persicaria affinis,* and the seedheads of grasses ensure this walled garden is attractive to visitors as well as to bees and birds.

There's something about the way Skye Hopetoun says the word Cotswold that makes it sound almost derogatory. It's not the area as such she has a problem with, but a certain Cotswold look she associates with a tame and restrained style of gardening. "All you see is *Alchemilla mollis*, roses, geranium and box," she says. "Always exactly the same; pretty when in flower but in winter there is box and nothing else."

The garden she has created at Hopetoun House near Edinburgh is miles away from this approach, both geographically and in spirit. Her garden is bold, ambitious and forward looking, balancing strong structure with informal perennial plantings that steal the show; most of them vibrantly coloured, confidently used and, in late summer, buzzing with insect life.

Such vibrant life is all the more welcome since Skye has created her perennial paradise in a walled garden that for many years had been used as a garden centre; its soil rendered lifeless beneath ground-cover fabric. "We moved here in 2006," says Skye. "It was digger work for a few years. I remember I got three days machine and driver hire for Christmas one year." It wasn't until 2008 that Skye was able to get down to planting, once the soil, released from its suffocating fabric blanket, ▷





Clockwise from top left

An unusual circular design of *Buxus sempervirens*, planted around pleached limes (*Tilia cordata*) creates a simple, stylish contrast to the lush perennials found elsewhere in the garden.

The terrace is particularly exuberant in late summer as the Michaelmas daisy *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow and pink *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' mix with the grass *Stipa lessingiana*

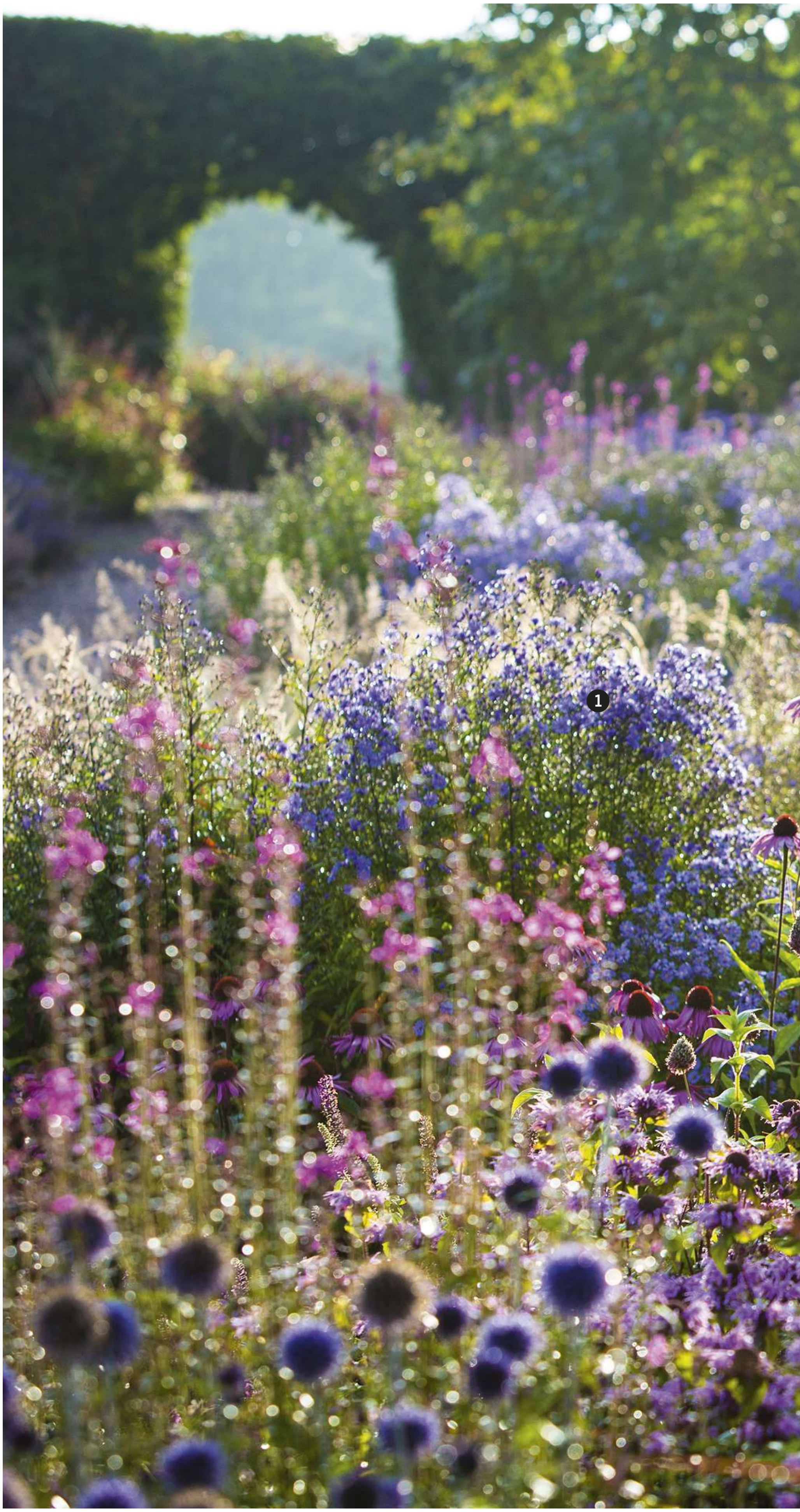
The old rose garden, with its largely white planting scheme, is centred around an unusual arrangement of box spheres.

The perfect spheres of *Echinops ritro* 'Veitch's Blue' blend beautifully with the tall, thin spires of *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple'.

▷ had acquired earthworms and life. The fact this was a former kitchen garden, that dates back to the early 1700s, meant the soil had received plentiful quantities of manure and other humus-building organic matter. Its walled site also provides a sheltered environment in an area that already has a mild climate thanks to the Firth of Forth. "The worst problem is the wind," says Skye, and winds have damaged some woody plants she has put in, such as *Magnolia grandiflora*.

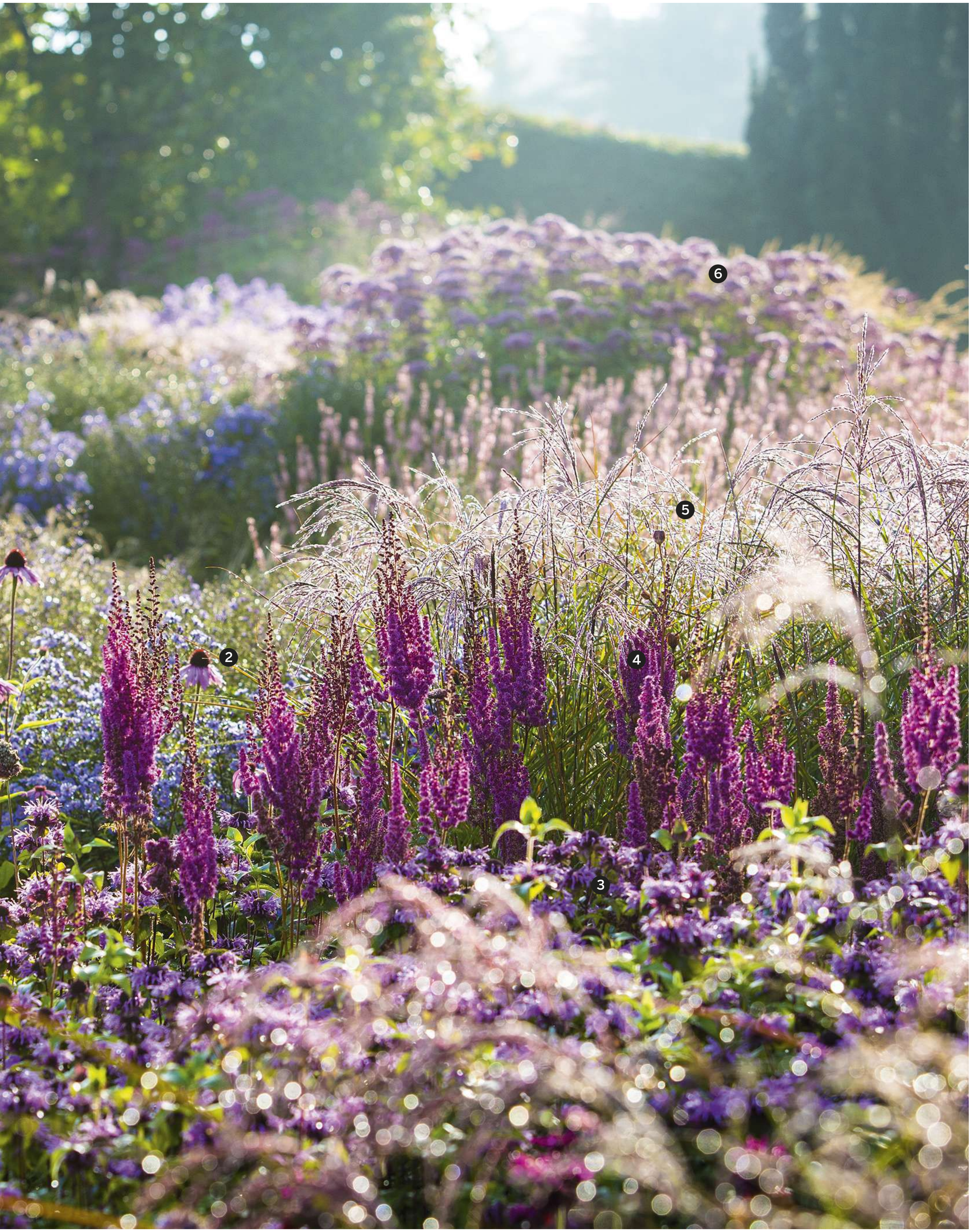
Early on Skye worked out she needed to take a low-maintenance approach to plant selection, using plants that required no deadheading or staking. Luckily, she discovered Orchard Dene Nurseries – "I found them by chance; a Dutch chap told me about them." Owned by Chris and Toby Marchant, this wholesale nursery in Oxfordshire grows a range of plants that proved to be perfect for Skye. Largely reflecting contemporary tastes and the need for long-lived, lower-maintenance plants, their range has played a major role in enabling Skye to achieve as much as she has.

In many cases she bought plants in as starter stock and has gone on to do a lot of her own propagating, including growing plants from seed, which has been especially satisfying at producing exactly the kind of ▷



Pinks and blues

Pastel colours dominate the terrace, with the soft blue of *Scutellaria incana* **(1)** offsetting the pinks of *Echinacea purpurea* **(2)**, the paler pink of *Monarda* 'Pawnee' **(3)** and the rich pink spires of *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* 'Purpurlanze' **(4)**. In winter the grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Fontäne' **(5)** and the strong upright forms of *Eupatorium maculatum* (Atropurpureum Group) **(6)**, which looks stunning planted en masse, offer seedhead interest.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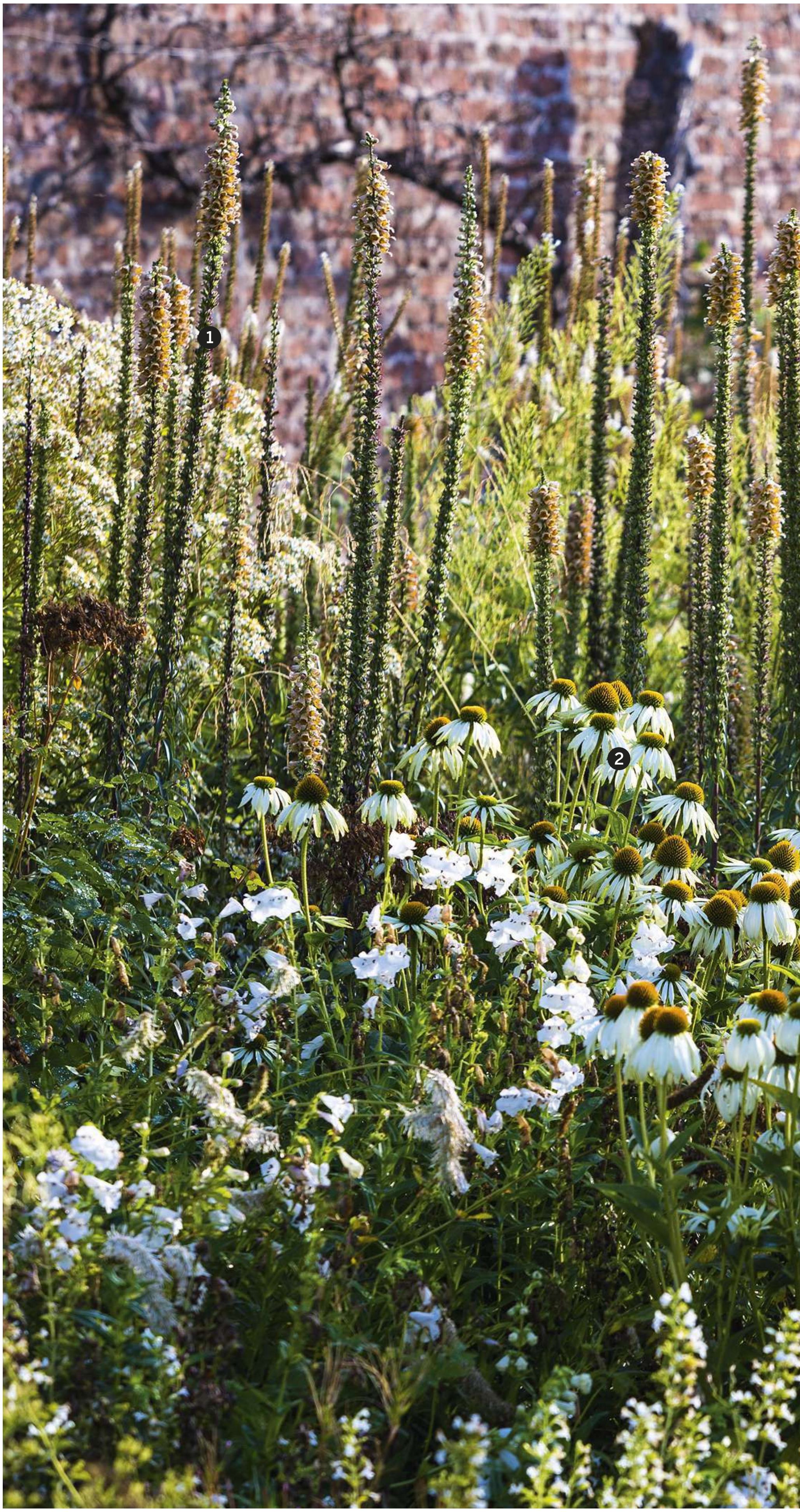
▷ quantities of plants she needs. After all, as she points out, "seeds want to grow".

Skye's design influences are wide ranging. "Rousham I love, but as a landscape," she says, and cites Pam Lewis's garden Sticky Wicket in Dorset – renowned for its wildflower meadows – as a huge influence, alongside Keith Wiley's garden Wildside in Devon. However, she also has time for a Cotswold garden Kiftsgate Court. Just a few hundred yards away from the historic Hidcote Manor Gardens, Kiftsgate has been a source of inspiration to a great many gardeners – far more so, it seems, than its iconic neighbour.

Much of the pleasure in exploring this garden is the innovation in planting design. In the old rose garden Skye has developed a system that aims to use a number of blended species groups, which merge into each other across a 500 metre-square area. Hopetoun's often experimental planting is in the great tradition of gardeners in Scotland being innovators, and possibly a little less prone to following trends than those in England – even outside of the Cotswolds.

Today, Skye's job as Hopetoun's property manager, means she has less time for gardening. She still manages at least an hour each day in the garden, but now has help three days a week from Caryn Campbell, a ▷



Shades of white

The simple combination of subtle colours in the old rose garden masks the complex underlying design of this perennial planting. Here, the brown flowers of a forest of foxglove relative, *Digitalis ferruginea* **(1)**, are picked out by the cones of *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan' **(2)**. The spikes of the self-seeding digitalis are one of the most elegant of perennial uprights. To the right, this shape is echoed by the pale-grey thimbles of *Eryngium yuccifolium* **(3)**.

3

▷ former accountant, who keeps things under control. "She gets on and weeds, hoes and mulches, and weeds and hoes again," says Skye. "All while claiming to enjoy it."

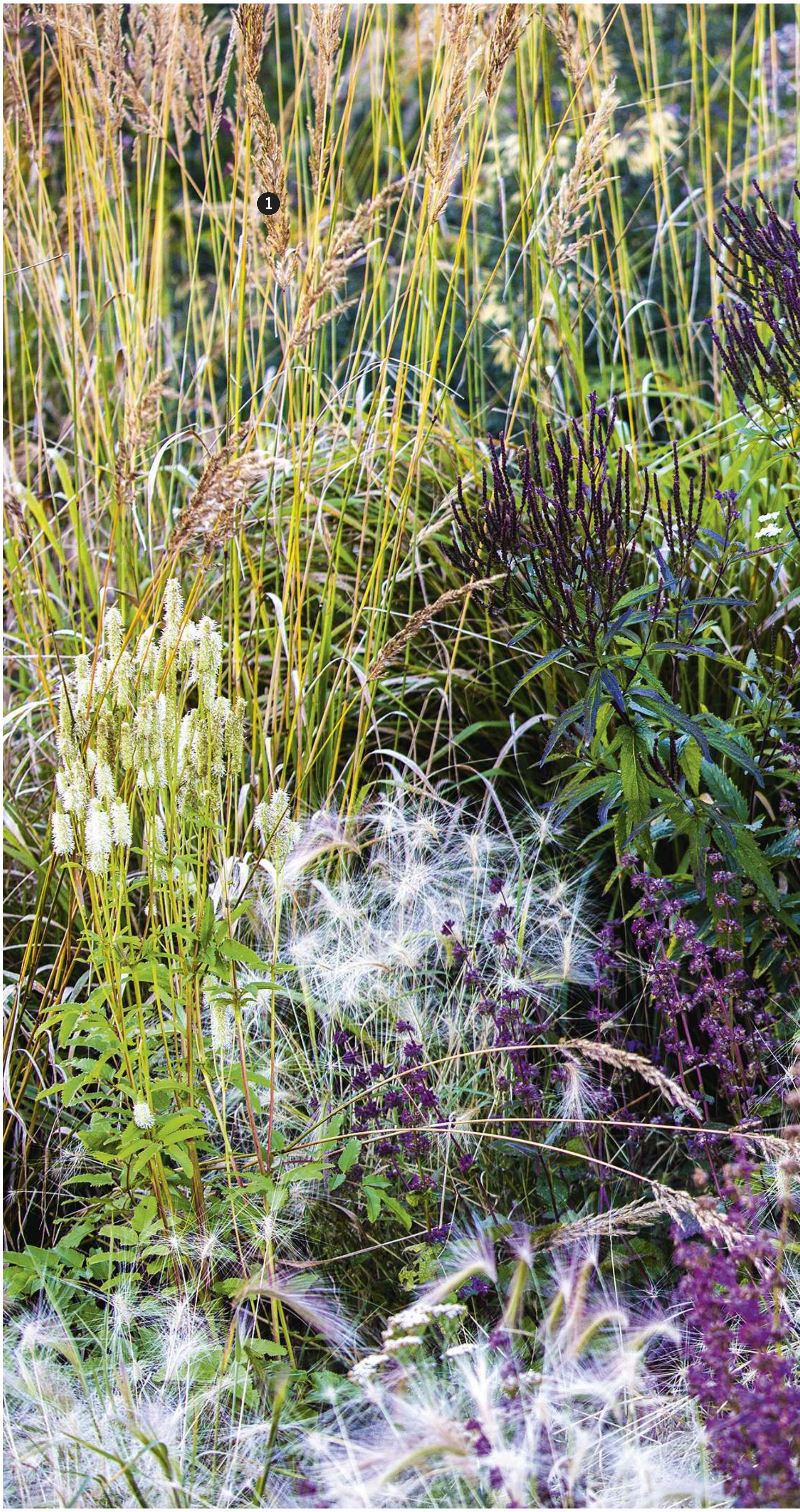
This is still a young garden, and much remains to be done, but it illustrates just what can be achieved in a relatively short period, with – especially given the scale – limited resources. Although sometimes realising broad ambitions on a tight budget can be an advantage. "If the money had been there I could have employed a proper designer," says Skye. "But I'm so glad I didn't." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Hopetoun House, South Queensferry, Edinburgh EH30 9SL.
Tel 0131 331 2451.
Web hopetoun.co.uk
Open The house and grounds are open to the public from Easter to September, but this private garden opens only occasionally for group tours. Call the number above for details.

READER EVENT

Author Noël Kingsbury will be talking about nature-inspired gardens at the *Gardens Illustrated* Festival, 25-26 March 2017. See page 8 or go to **gardensfestival.com**



Purple haze

The neutral, straw shades of *Calamagrostis emodensis* **(1)** help to balance the rich, late-season splash of colour provided by *Verbena hastata* **(2)** and the purple *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain' **(3)**, which flowers in May to June, but if cut back will repeat flower. Their colour appears all the more vivid next to the pale grass *Hordeum jubatum* **(4)** and upright cream spires of *Sanguisorba canadensis* **(5)**. Both the verbena and the hordeum are short-lived, but will seed around.

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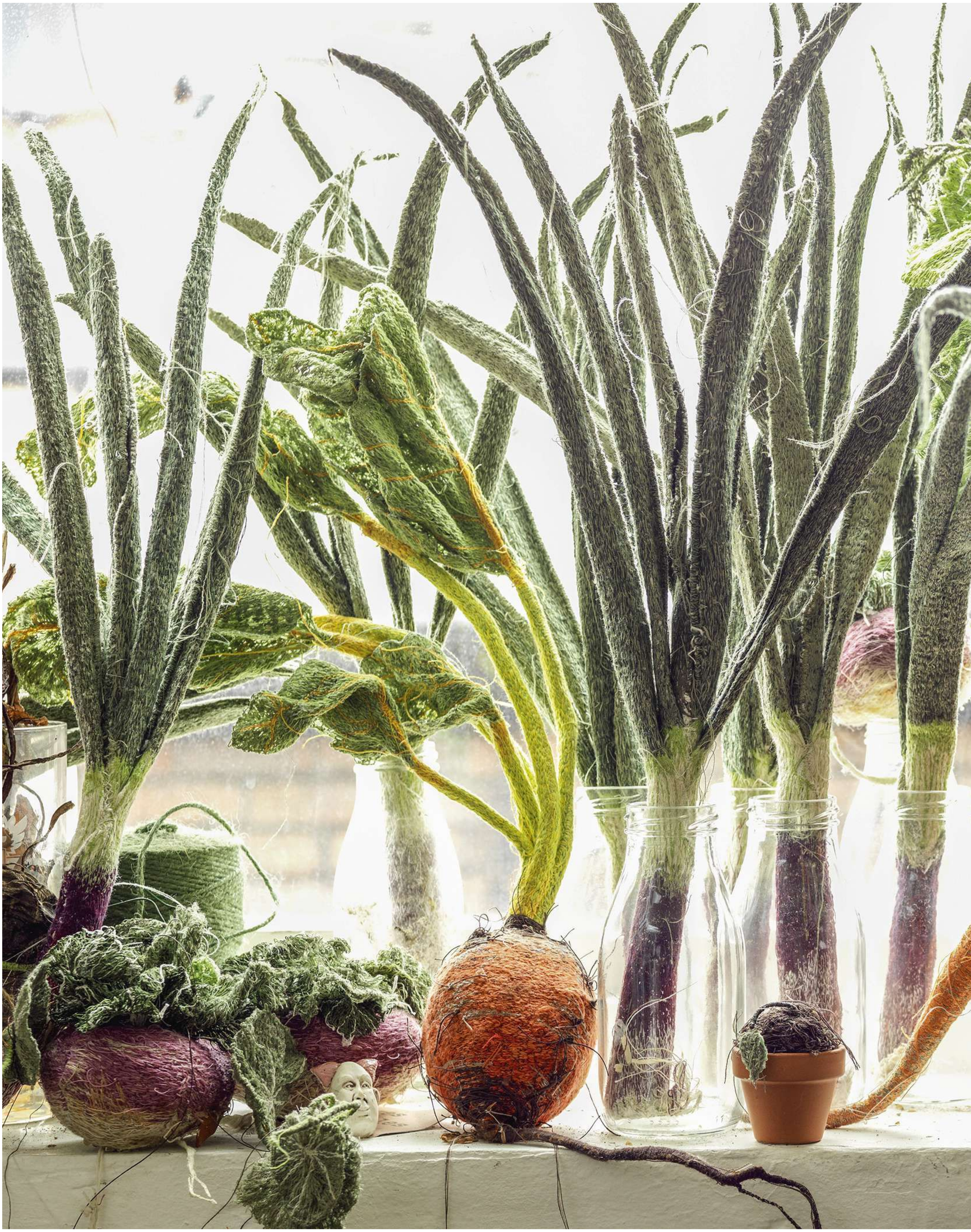
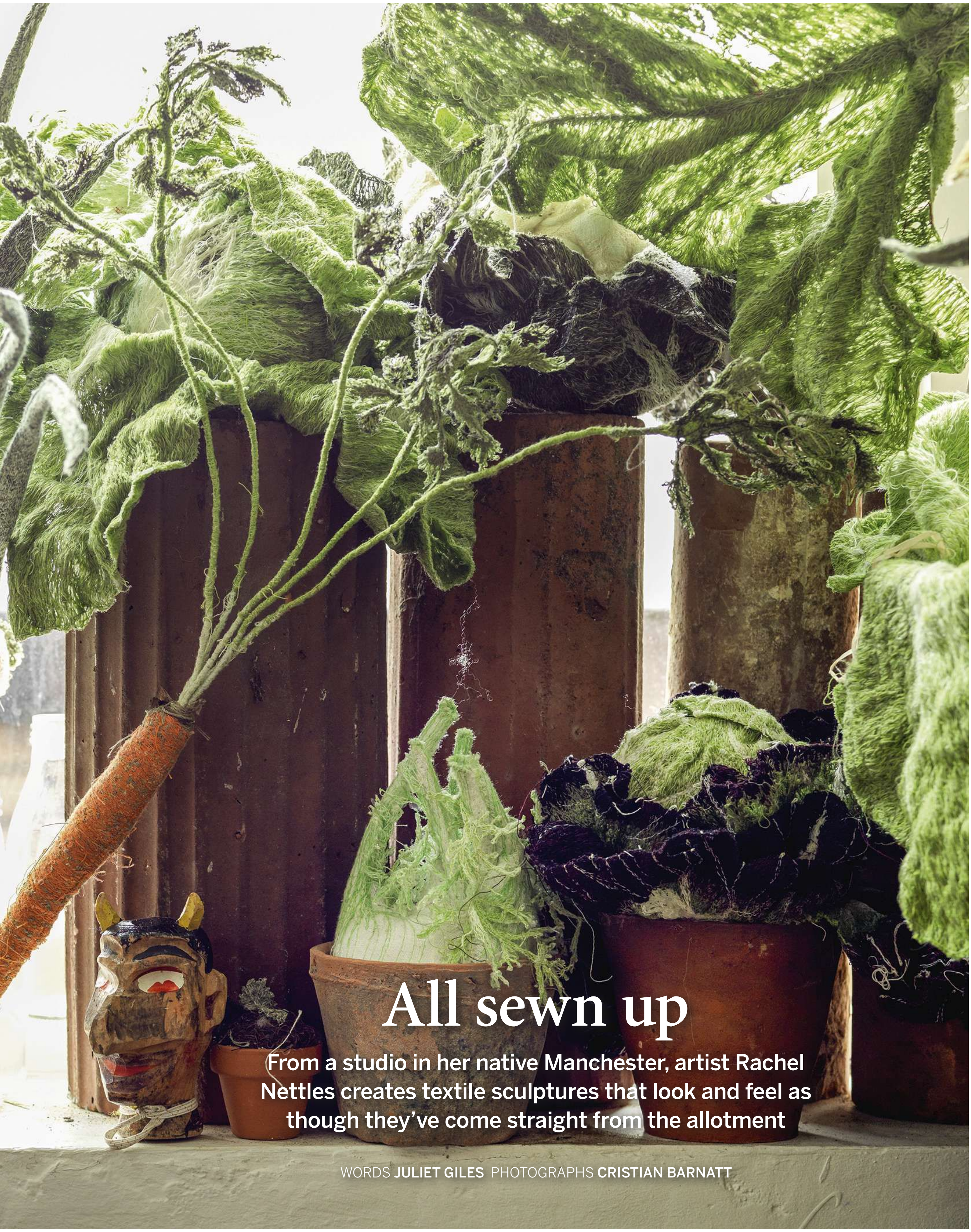




All sewn up

From a studio in her native Manchester, artist Rachel Nettles creates textile sculptures that look and feel as though they've come straight from the allotment

WORDS **JULIET GILES** PHOTOGRAPHS **CRISTIAN BARNATT**

“Even though they’re hard work, they are fun to make. I do laugh at them when they’re finished”

Sometimes when she’s exhibiting her works, artist Rachel Nettles notices people looking at her table a little quizzically. What on earth, she can see them wondering, is this woman doing with all those crates of vegetables at an art fair? So lifelike are her cauliflowers and cabbages, her pots of fennel, her bunches of carrots and beetroots that more than one person has been surprised to discover they are made solely from fabric and thread. And sometimes it can take a while for the penny to drop.

“I love the look of amazement on people’s faces when they realise they’re not real,” she says. It’s a look she’s familiar with as her sculptures are uncannily accurate. Every detail, from leaves that crumple and fade like Miss Havisham’s gown, right down to tiny hand-sewn blemishes, is perfectly captured. It’s these imperfections that bring her sculptures to life and they’re what excites Rachel about her subjects. “The more gnarled, the more holes they have from little creatures, the better.”

Rachel works in a small studio, not far from where she grew up on the outskirts of Manchester, now the base for her company Cabbages & Nettles. Its wall are plastered with the sources of her inspiration: posters of heirloom vegetables; postcards of work by painters – Francis Bacon and Egon Schiele – who inspired her as a fine art student; while every inch of floor space is taken up by plastic crates overflowing with myriad coloured threads or actual vegetables in varying states of decay.

From these vegetables Rachel creates the templates she uses to cut out the plant’s body and leaves in a base fabric. She then adds texture and colour on her sewing machine, using a technique known as free-motion machine embroidery, which allows her to apply threads as an artist would paint, building up the different colours and thread weights, changing the top and bobbin tensions, until her base fabric is covered. She then stitches the different parts together by hand. Depending on its complexity, each sculpture can take her around three days to complete. “Even though they’re hard work, they are fun to make,” she says. “I do laugh at them when they’re finished.” To be fair Rachel laughs a lot, infectiously, and her exuberance seems to shine out through every stitch. You can see how much care and thought goes into each piece, and Rachel loves the challenge of working out how to create the veg; how she can get big leaves through her sewing machine, and ensure the textures and the colours are just right.

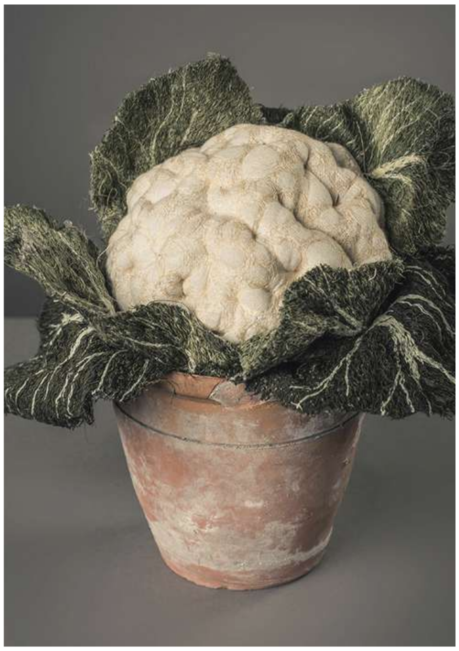
Over time, the techniques she uses have changed. When she started, three years ago, she admits it was largely a case of trial and error, but as she discovers what works she is constantly adding new fabrics and colours, and changing her stitching techniques and the stuffings she uses so her sculptures don’t just look like the real thing they have a similar weight and feel.

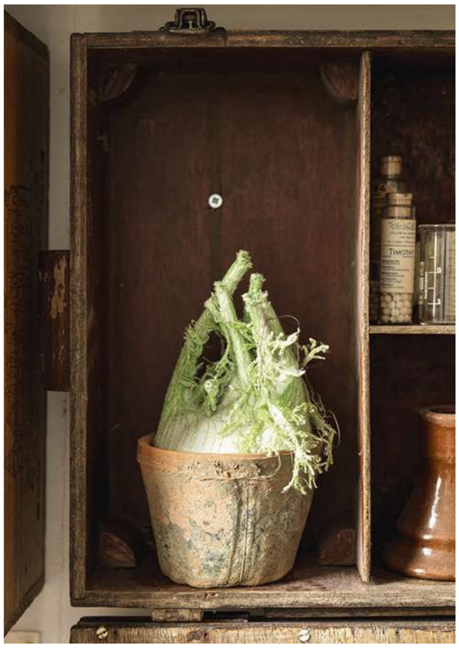
As her skill and confidence have grown, so has her success. She started selling her sculptures through local craft fairs, before the organisers of Manchester’s summer garden festival, Dig the City, invited her to exhibit at the 2015 show. The ‘allotment’ she created, complete with yellow-painted potting shed and raised beds of cauliflowers and lettuces growing out of embroidered soil, won her a silver gilt and introduced her work to a much wider audience.

Earlier this year, the home and clothing store Anthropologie commissioned an installation for its King’s Road gallery for Chelsea Flower Show week. A mammoth task requiring hours of work and the assistance of three talented textile students from Manchester University. “By the end, my fingers were sore, but I did it.” More shows are on the way and she’s already eyeing up new vegetables to challenge her sewing machine, with celeriac and globe artichokes high on her list. “Celeriac would be so cool to make,” she laughs. “I’d have to find one with leaves, but if I could, I might even buy one myself.” □

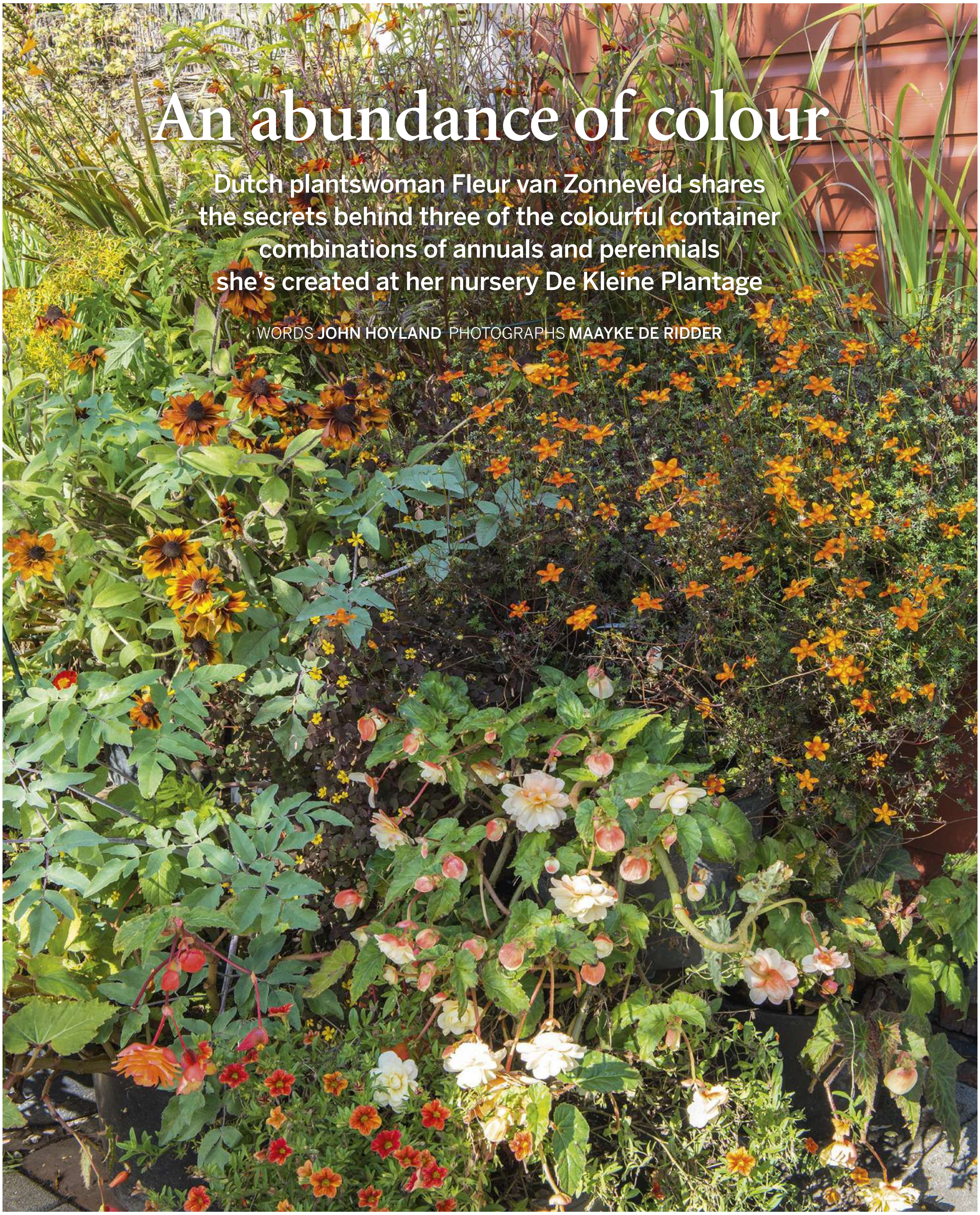
USEFUL INFORMATION

Rachel’s textile sculptures are available from The Imaginarium in York (Tel 01904 466642, yorkshiresoap.co.uk) and 15 Collingwood in Northampton (Tel 01604 714644, 15collingwood.com). Find out more about her work at **cabbagesandnettles.com**





Cabbages
& Nettles

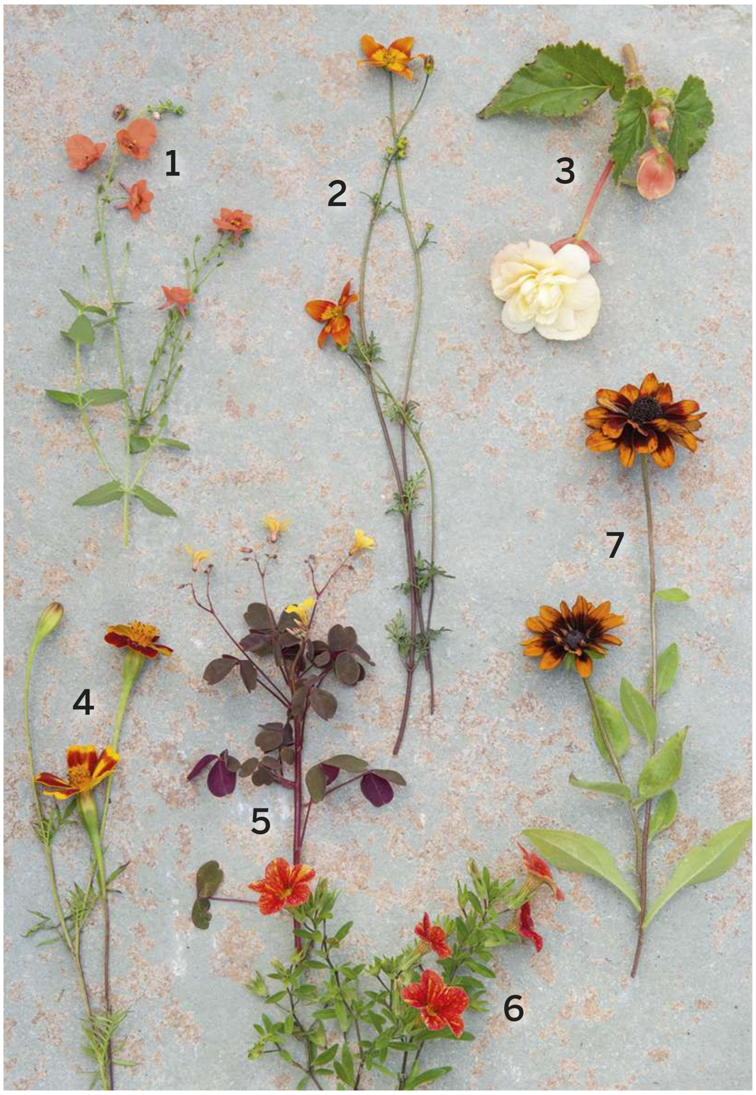


An abundance of colour

Dutch plantswoman Fleur van Zonneveld shares the secrets behind three of the colourful container combinations of annuals and perennials she's created at her nursery De Kleine Plantage

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

At the entrance to Fleur van Zonneveld's nursery in the Netherlands exuberant displays of colourful annuals, perennials and shrubs unite to create a cheerful welcome. For Fleur, it is annuals that bring vitality to the spectacle. Annuals have to germinate, grow to maturity, flower, set seed and die all in a single year. The requirement to attract as many pollinating insects as possible during a short life span encourages a long flowering period and masses of colourful flowers. Although garden designers often dismiss annuals because they create too much work, Fleur values them for the abundance of their flowers and for the loose, natural feel they bring to her plantings. She never tires of the thrill of seeing seedlings push through the soil nor of the moment when the beauty of their first flowers is revealed.



Bright and beautiful

This attention-grabbing collection is centred around zingy oranges and sparkling yellows that Fleur says always put a spring in her step. She groups the pots together at the entrance to the nursery where they create a vibrant welcome. The flamboyant colours of the alonsoa, the tagetes and the bidens are made even brighter when seen against the dark foliage of the oxalis. The creamy colour of the begonia harmonises with the stronger colours and prevents the display from becoming garish. In the centre of the display, the glaucous foliage of *Mathiasella bupleuroides* does a similar job, acting as a calming background to some of the more dazzling flowers. In autumn, its leaves will turn a burnished red, adding to the fiery feel of the group. As the display reaches autumn, the colours are toned down by the paler flowers of the chrysanthemum and the soft flower spikes of the grasses. Plants that tumble over the pots, which in this display includes the petunia and the begonia, give a sense of generous, abundant planting and also help to hide some of the containers. Height is provided by the grasses, the tagetes and, most spectacularly, the *Sinacalia tangutica* – the seedheads of which will last through the winter. This species of tagetes is much taller than most and is one of Fleur's favourite annuals. In the garden the sinacalia can spread rapidly, particularly in moist soil, but will live happily in a large container for several years as long as it does not dry out.

Plants (see above)

1 *Alonsoa meridionalis*
Cut back after first the flush of bright-orange flowers. 30cm. USDA 9a-10b†.

2 *Bidens* 'Hawaiian Flare Orange Drop' Bright-orange, star-shaped flowers from July to September. 30cm.

3 *Begonia* 'Inbegchard' (Chardonnay) Elegant, creamy-white flowers with trailing foliage. 30cm. USDA 9a-11.

4 *Tagetes patula* When grown in pots it must not be allowed to dry out. 1m. RHS H2, USDA 2a-11.

5 *Oxalis spiralis* subsp. *vulcanicola* 'Dark Form'
Dark foliage dotted with yellow, star-shaped flowers. 20cm.

6 *Calibrachoa* Can-can Terracotta (= 'Balcantera')
Flowers May to October. 35cm. USDA 9a-11.

7 *Rudbeckia hirta* Cherokee Sunset mixed
Large, double, daisy-like flowers. 70cm. USDA 5a-9b.

8 *Mathiasella bupleuroides*
Glaucous, evergreen foliage brushed with a dusky pink on the stems. 1m. USDA 7b-10b.

9 *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Red Head' Large, bottle-brush plumes, which begin red in June then fade to a biscuit colour by autumn. 80cm. USDA 5a-9b.

10 *Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora* 'Golden Glory'
Light-yellow flowers open from orange buds. 70cm. USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Calamagrostis brachytricha* 'Mona' If grown in containers, needs to be kept well watered. 1m. USDA 4a-9b.

12 *Chrysanthemum* 'Dernier Soleil'
An old French cultivar that flowers from August to first frosts. 80cm.

13 *Sinacalia tangutica*
Rampant, moisture-loving perennial with tall, dark stems and cone-shaped, yellow flower heads. 1.5m. USDA 5a-8b.

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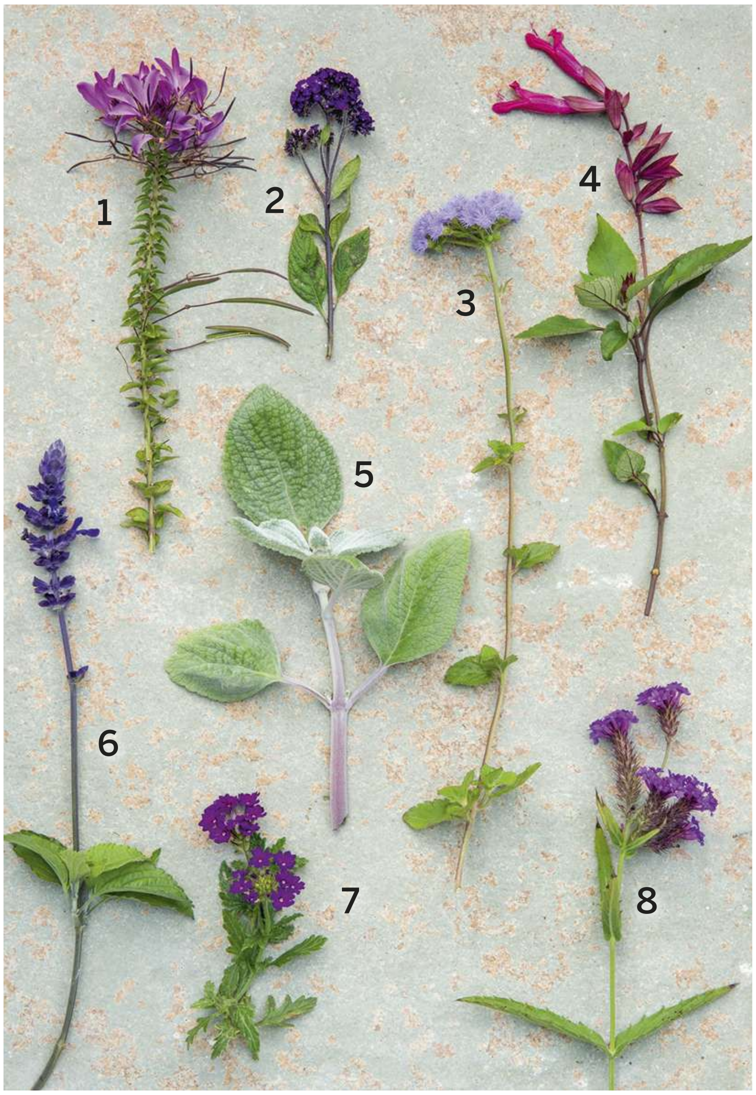
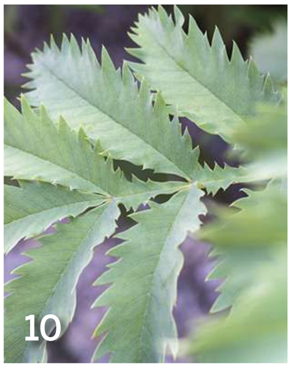
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.





Out of the blue

In this collection Fleur uses many plants with grey and silver foliage that act as a background to blue, purple and pink flowers. The soft, velvety foliage of *Plectranthus argentatus* is the same tone as that of *Melianthus major*, which will tower above it by the end of the season. *Baptisia australis* will form a dome of glaucous-grey foliage that will be attractive long after its flowers are over. Against this setting Fleur adds the punchy blue flowers of *Campanula* 'Sarastro' and *Heliotropium arborescens* 'Marine' and, later in the year, the intense colours of cleomes, salvias and verbenas. This display also includes the tall, white, nodding heads of *Gladiolus murielae*, with the sweet perfume of the gladiolus blending with the spicy scent of the heliotropium and the light fragrance of the buddleja. The plants grow into each other and intermingle with little pruning or staking. Each plant is grown in its own pot, which is never smaller than ten litres. For smaller annuals, such as diascias and verbenas, Fleur will place several plants in a pot – although she never plants different annuals in the same pot – whereas for larger ones, such as the *Plectranthus argentatus*, she will give each single specimen its own pot. Perennials grown in pots need to be rejuvenated at least every two years. Fleur cuts off the lowest 10cm of the roots and soil and replaces them at the bottom of the pot with fresh compost. She also applies a layer of compost at the top of the pot.

Plants (see above)

1 *Cleome hassleriana* 'Violet Queen' Pretty flowers on thorny stems. 1.5m. USDA 1a-12.

2 *Heliotropium arborescens* 'Marine' Scented, long-lasting flowers. 30cm. USDA 10a-11.

3 *Ageratum* 'Dondoschnittperle' Flowers August – November. 1.5m.

4 *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish' A tender perennial grown as an annual. 80cm. USDA 9a-11.

5 *Plectranthus argentatus* Often grown for its magnificent foliage. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.

6 *Salvia* Mystic Spires Blue (= 'Balsalmisp') Tender perennial grown as an annual. 70cm. USDA 7a-9b.

7 *Glandularia* 'Homestead Purple' Vigorous verbena with abundant clusters of purple flowers. 25cm. USDA 5a-9b.

8 *Verbena rigida* Short-lived perennial often treated as an annual. 60cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-11.

9 *Thalictrum* 'Splendide' A froth of purply pink flowers on a tall framework of narrow stems. 2.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

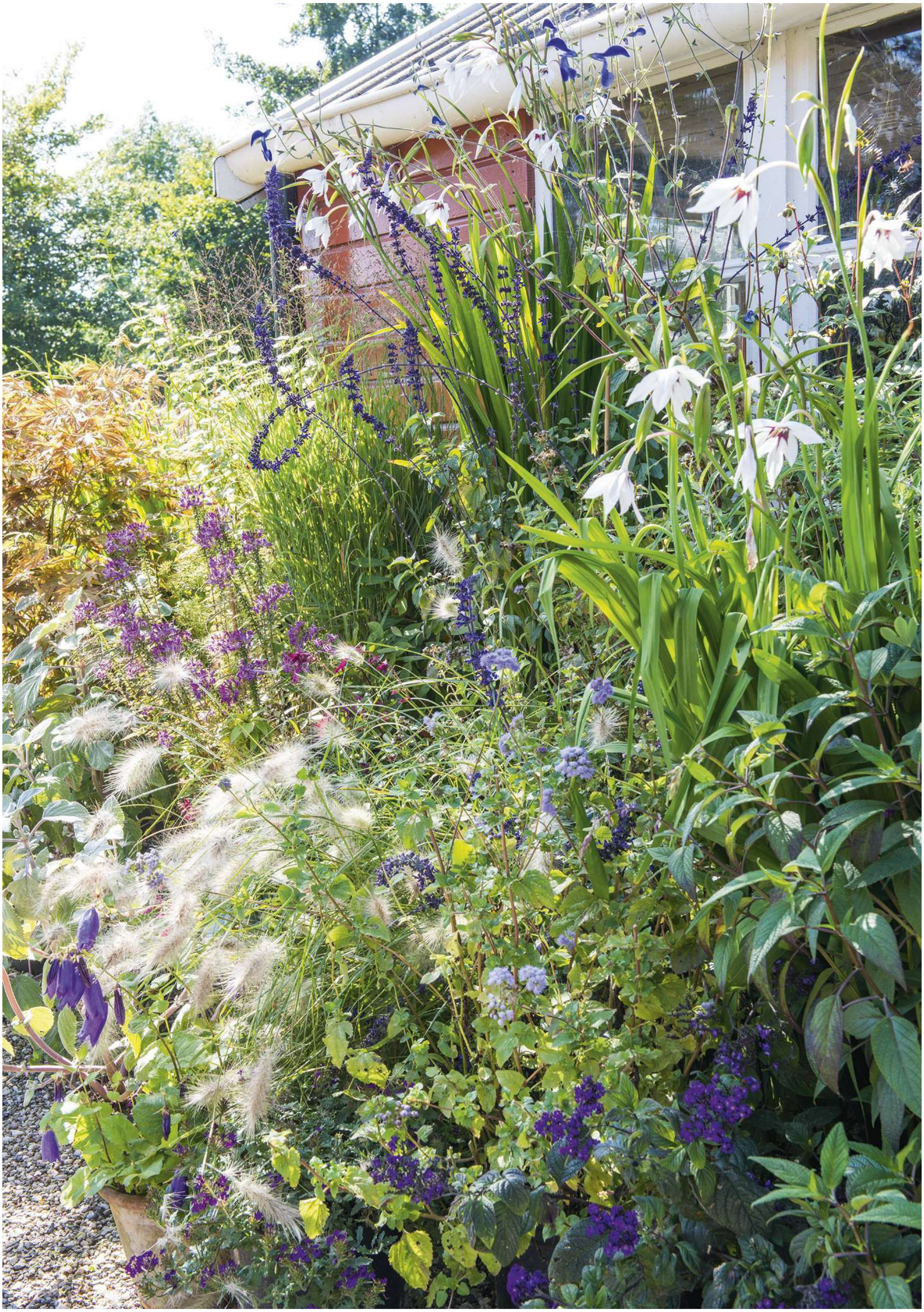
10 *Melianthus major* Palm-shaped leaves with a serrated edge. In sheltered places it is evergreen. 2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

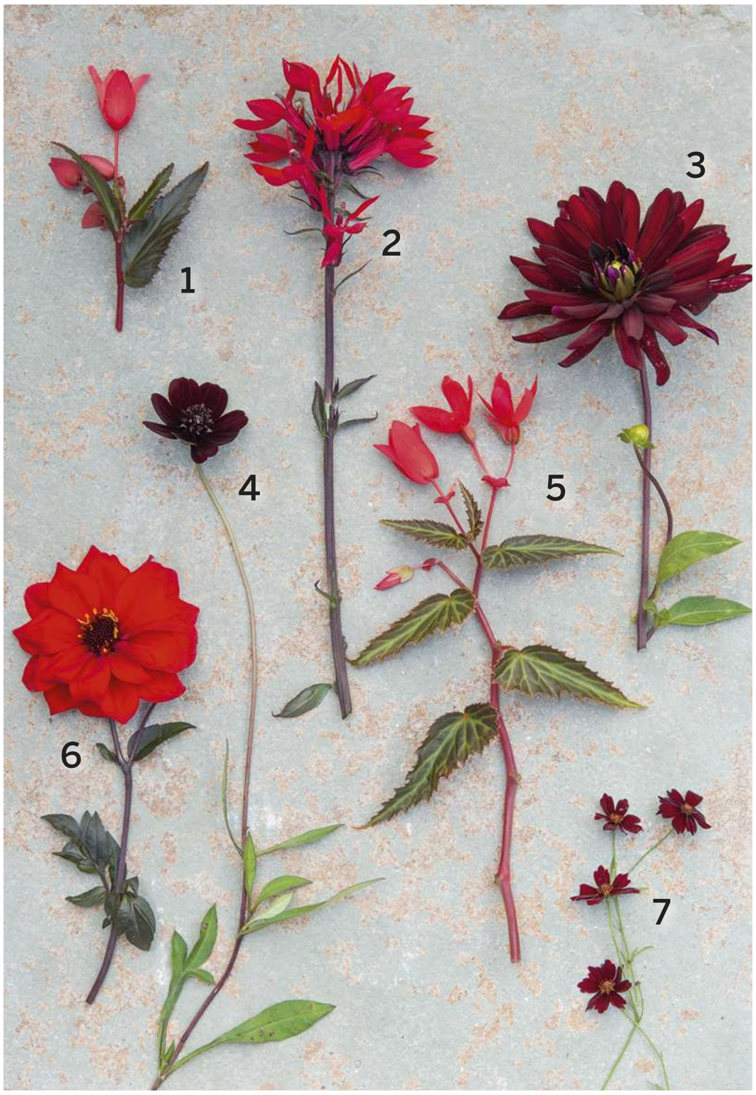
11 *Baptisia australis* Glaucous foliage and pea-like blue flowers in spring, followed by black seedpods. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

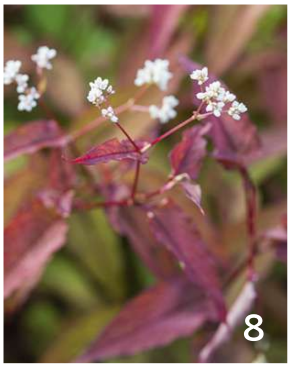
12 *Buddleja lindleyana* Tubular, lavender-blue flowers that have a purple interior. 2.5m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

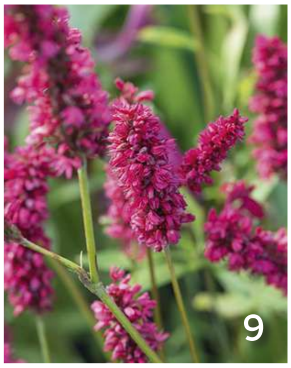
13 *Campanula* 'Sarastro' This imposing bellflower is a sterile hybrid, so flowers throughout the summer. 70cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

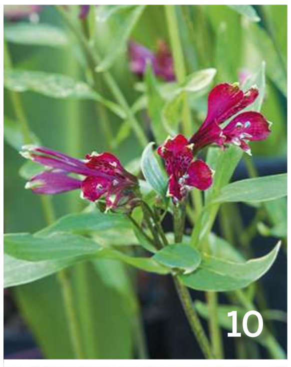
14 *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' Arching flower stems resemble large, fluffy caterpillars. 60cm. USDA 6a-9b.

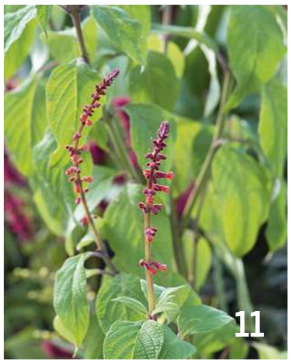


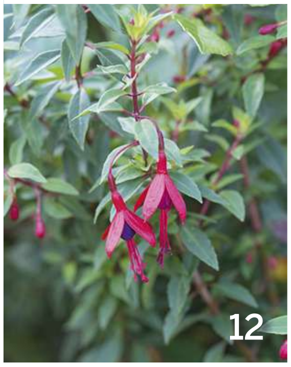


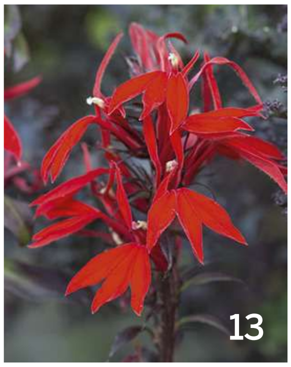












Playing with fire

Fleur's pots look good from May to October. She achieves this by using a combination of long-flowering plants, plants that flower late in the year and plants with interesting foliage. During the first two weeks of the season, the foliage of the begonias, the persicarias and the alstroemeria provide interest before the flowers appear. Once they come into flower, the cosmos, begonias and coreopsis will continue all through the summer and into the autumn. As well as providing lots of flowers, the cosmos also brings a delicious chocolatey scent to the party. Producing so many flowers puts a huge strain on a plant so to help them along Fleur feeds all her plants with a weak solution of liquid fertiliser every time she waters the pots. To keep them flowering, Fleur regularly deadheads the dahlias and trims the coreopsis after its first flowers are over. This collection also includes pots of pineapple lilies (seen next to the shed): *Eucomis autumnalis* and *Eucomis pole-evansii*. As well as having attractive, exotic-looking flowers, these also have beautiful seedheads later in the year. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

- **Kwekerij De Kleine Plantage** Handerweg 1, 9967 TC Eenrum, the Netherlands. **Tel** +31 (0)595 491604. **Web** dekleineplantage.nl

Plants (see above)

1 *Begonia* Amour (= 'Yamour') A vigorous, trailing begonia that produces a cascade of red flowers from early June. 30cm.

2 *Lobelia cardinalis* Striking plant with spires of scarlet flowers in July and August. 90cm. AGM. RHS H3. USDA 2a-9b.

3 *Dahlia* 'Chat Noir' Striking dahlia with dark-red flowers. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H3.

4 *Cosmos atrosanguineus* The chocolate-scented cosmos flowers until autumn. 50cm. RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.

5 *Begonia* Summerwings Dark Elegance (='Insumdaele') Trailing habit with profusion of red flowers. 25cm. USDA 7b-8b.

6 *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff' Dark foliage and red flowers. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-11.

7 *Coreopsis* 'Limerock Ruby' Perennial often grown as annual bedding plant. Midsummer flowers get second flush if cut back. 50cm. USDA 8a-9b.

8 *Persicaria microcephala* 'Red Dragon' Spectacular purple foliage that has a dark heart at the base of each leaf. 1m. USDA 6a-8b.

9 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Fat Domino' Rich-red flowers appear in July and August. If grown in pots it needs regular watering. 1m. USDA 5a-9b.

10 *Alstroemeria pulchella* 'Dark Form' Flowers in June and July. 60cm. USDA 7a-10b.

11 *Salvia confertiflora* Spires of dusky-red flowers appear at the end of summer. Needs protection from frosts. 1.2m. RHS H2, USDA 8a-10b.

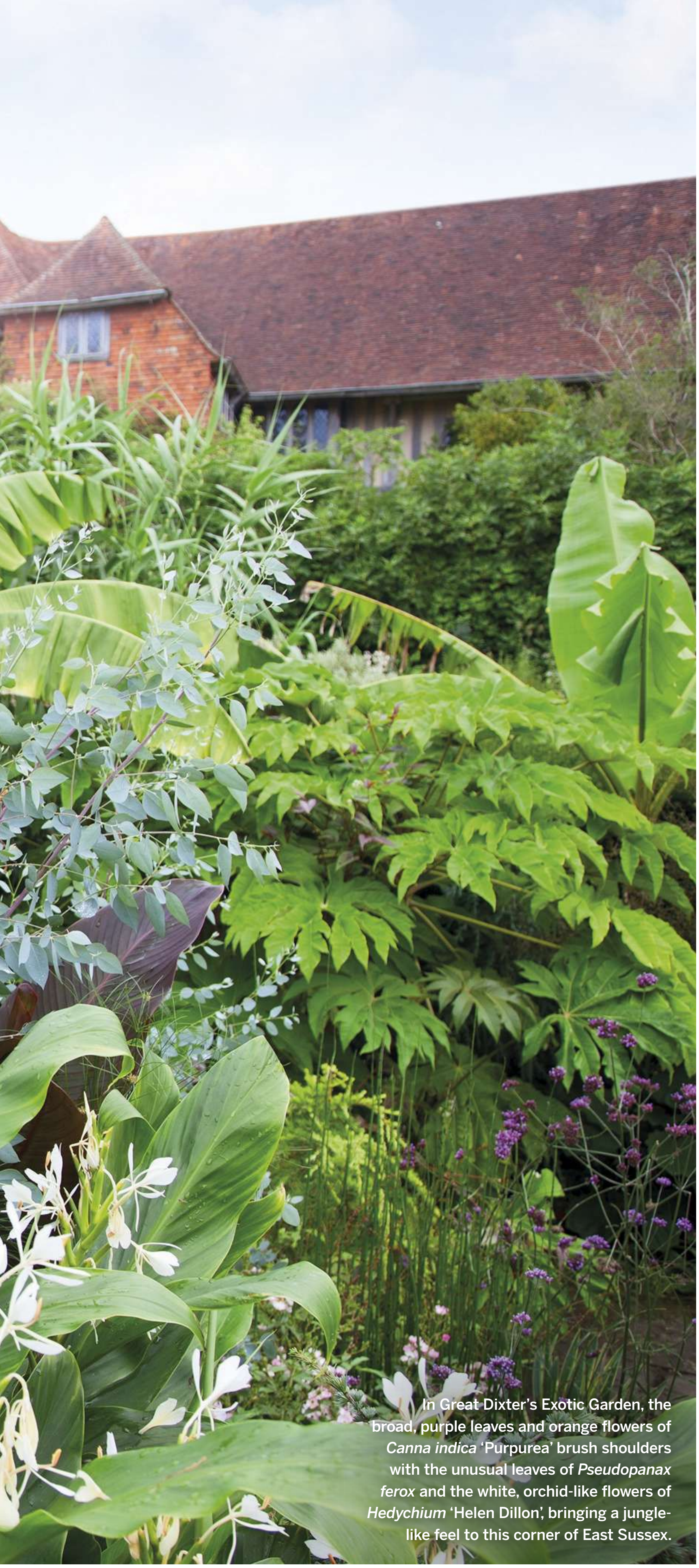
12 *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Pumila' A dwarf plant smothered in red and violet flowers from July to October. 25cm. USDA 6a-9b.

13 *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Fan Scharlach' Scarlet-flowered perennial often grown as an annual. Needs plenty of moisture. 1m. USDA 5a-8b.

A taste for the exotic

The exotic garden at Great Dixter caused shockwaves in the horticultural community when it was first planted – but how do you create a feeling of the exotic in East Sussex?

WORDS **FERGUS GARRETT** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNAÏCK GUITTENY**



In Great Dixter's Exotic Garden, the broad, purple leaves and orange flowers of *Canna indica* 'Purpurea' brush shoulders with the unusual leaves of *Pseudopanax ferox* and the white, orchid-like flowers of *Hedychium* 'Helen Dillon', bringing a jungle-like feel to this corner of East Sussex.

Fergus Garrett is a plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex. He also lectures, writes and serves on Royal Horticultural Society committees

In its original sense the term 'exotic' could be applied to anything non-native, but more often it conjures up images of curious things from faraway places, colourful and extraordinary objects, exciting people with alluring and sensual features, and plants with extraordinary shapes and textures. Exotic places makes you think of hot, steamy jungles dripping with lushness, where tree frogs and monkeys emit deafening sounds, and slithering anacondas and silky black panthers await in the shadows.

And so when Christopher Lloyd wanted to create an exotic garden at Great Dixter back in 1993, he imagined an other-worldly place ablaze with colour from cannas and dahlias, and swashbuckling bold foliage. I, on the other hand, visualised a scene out of a Rousseau painting, with palms and large green leaves creating a place of mystery. But like the great post-impressionist himself, neither of us had ever seen a real jungle, so our imaginations took over. The resulting hybrid was a mix of colour and daring, connected by seams of green, with touches of the bizarre and curious.

We could have concentrated on tropical plants alone. These are the lushest and most extravagant of all – but these aren't easy to grow in East Sussex, as they need 100 per cent humidity with constant heat. They would thrive in a conservatory, but we wanted to play outside. More suitable for the UK climate are the exotica from the subtropics – the climatic zone between the tropics and the temperate – which can be divided into the humid subtropics, where the rainy season coincides with the summer, and the dry subtropics, such as the Mediterranean, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Plants from these areas can withstand our mild summers and cooler nights, but still provide a huge range of shapes and textures.

It's interesting how extreme climate and growing conditions have shaped the way plants look. The climatic diversity of ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ the tropics and subtropics is matched by a wealth of different cacti and succulents. These are the most architectural exotics of all, sculpted in arid sandy or rocky deserts, developing an array of extraordinarily peculiar shapes and textures. Spiky agaves, fuzzy opuntias, furry kalanchoes and fleshy blue senecios are all wonderfully bizarre and exotic in the true sense.

Also, there are many hardy plants that give us a feeling of exotica – usually those with large leaves or interesting shapes. Glossy leaved ferns, pollarded paulownias, coppiced sumacs, elegant bamboos and strappy phormiums will all do this.

Rather than stick to one group we decided to pull on a wide range, giving us the richest and most diverse picture. But, compatibility had to be considered. A succulent will not grow side by side with a tropical – they need different conditions. A black colocasia looks extraordinary among fleshy blue senecios, but one requires water and the other doesn't.

Another consideration is spacing, as a grey, weeping conifer may contrast with the purple sugar cane, but in a hot year the latter outgrows and smothers the other. Different plants have different responses to heat and water. Some shut down when it's too hot while others romp away, making correct spacing difficult. In an ideal world you want an intimate yet clear picture not a congested mass, and so plants that respond to heat similarly make better bedfellows.

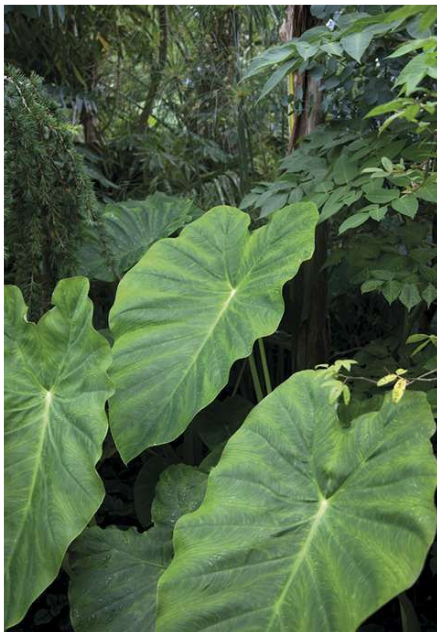
A sheltered location is also important as strong winds can desiccate and shred large leaves. Cacti won't mind but broad-leaved tropicals need protection. The space at Dixter was perfect: sheltered on all four sides with yew hedging and an old building.

When constructing our combinations we had to make sure that plants visually connected. It's no good having a large banana with a tiny fern because they are not intimate. But a banana hugging the rounded leaves of coppiced paulownias, next to the upright stems of *Arundo donax*, then stepping down to dark-leaved cannas, and then *Persicaria virginiana* 'Brushstrokes', all play off one another, contrasting in shape and texture. Producing pictures with exotic plants is relatively easy as they are all strong characters and it's a case of working one off another while making sure they are compatible. □

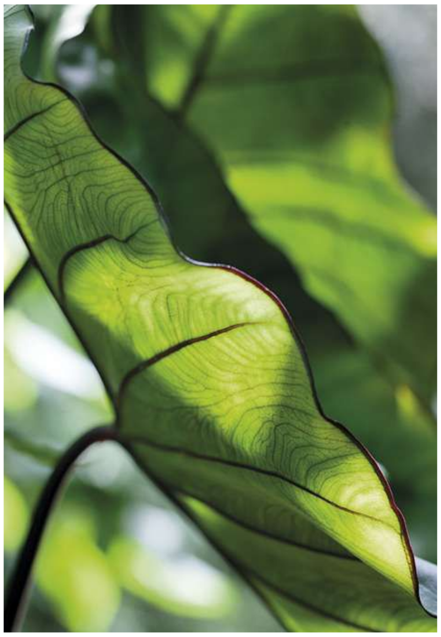
• Fergus's recommendations for exotic-looking plants continue over the next six pages.

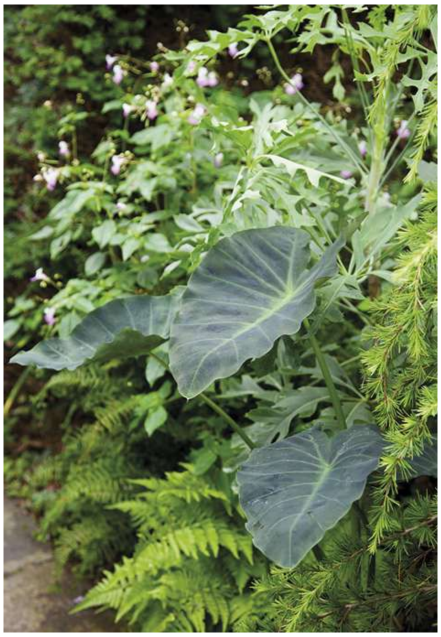
Bold leaves

COLOCASIA ESCULENTA
Large, heart-shaped leaves with complex interveinal mottling of varying tones hang from arching, thick fleshy stems making huge focal points. Needs sun or part shade. 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H1A, USDA 8a-10b†.

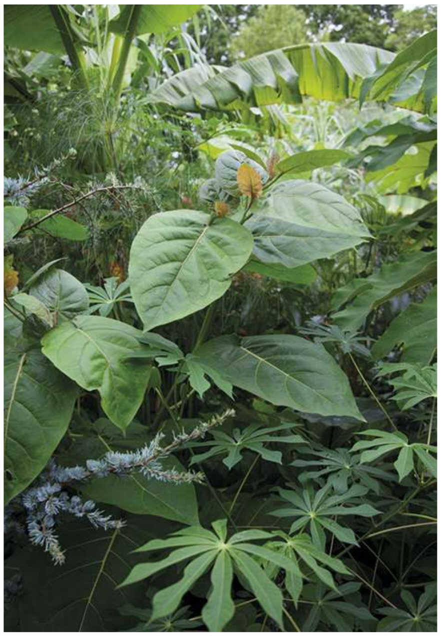


***COLOCASIA ESCULENTA* 'FONTANESII'**
Long, arching, jet-black stems support elongated, dark-green leaves subtly marbled in an oily glaze and beautifully intersected with dark veins radiating out from a central point. Sun or part shade. 1m. USDA 9a-12.





***COLOCASIA ESCULENTA* 'ILLUSTRIS'**
Impressive foliage that is smudged with extraordinary markings in large blotches. Overall impression is of chic, charcoal green with a hypnotic charm. Loves heat and moisture. 1m. USDA 9a-11.

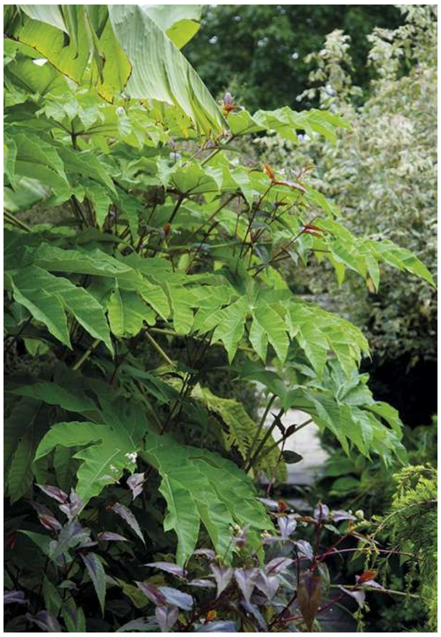


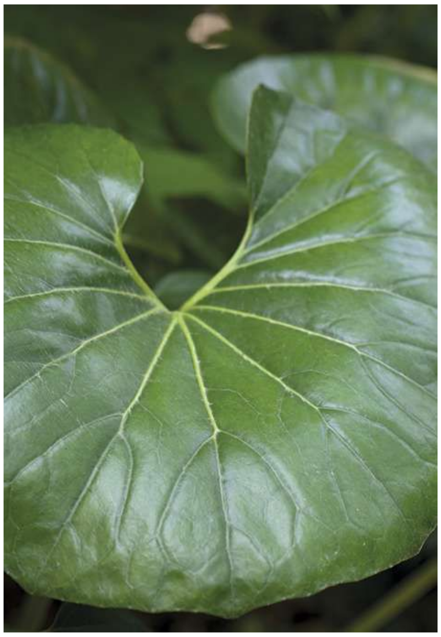
CYPHOMANDRA BETACEA
This tamarillo or tree tomato from South America is widely grown for its edible, crimson fruit. Easy from seed, making a sturdy plant in its second year. Happy in sun or part shade. 3m. USDA 10a-11.

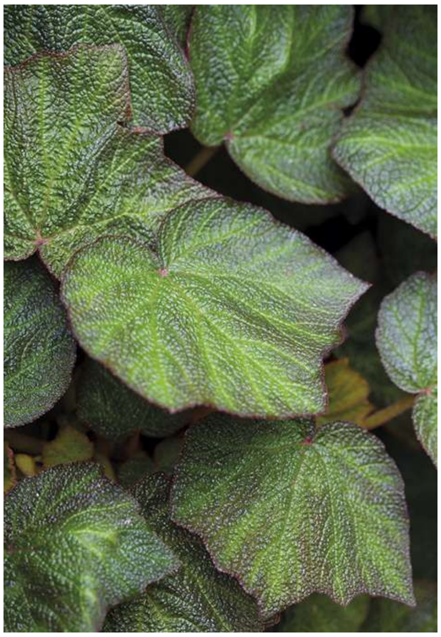
***TETRAPANAX PAPYRIFER* ‘REX’**
Deeply lobed, palmate foliage is held flat, radiating out from stiff, wooden, suckering stems. Loose panicles of white flowers in October are followed by black fruit. Sun or part shade. 3m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

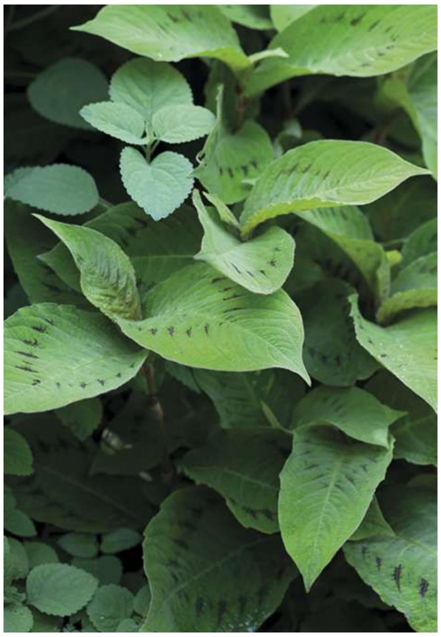
FARFUGIUM JAPONICUM* VAR. *GIGANTEUM
With highly glossed, deep-green, kidney-shaped leaves, this makes a great contrast to ferns. Native of moist areas in eastern Asia. 50cm. USDA 7a-10b.

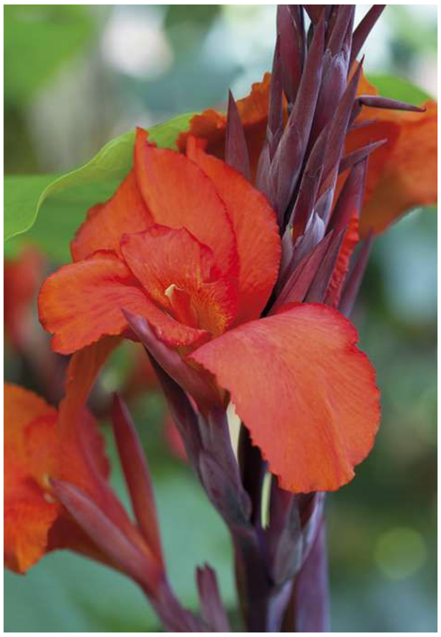
***BEGONIA* ‘BURLE MARX’**
An oddball begonia with kidney-shaped, palmate, lobed leaves, highlighted in rusty red. These leaves are glossy, with an attractive warty texture. Needs shade. 50cm. AGM. RHS H1B, USDA 10b-11.

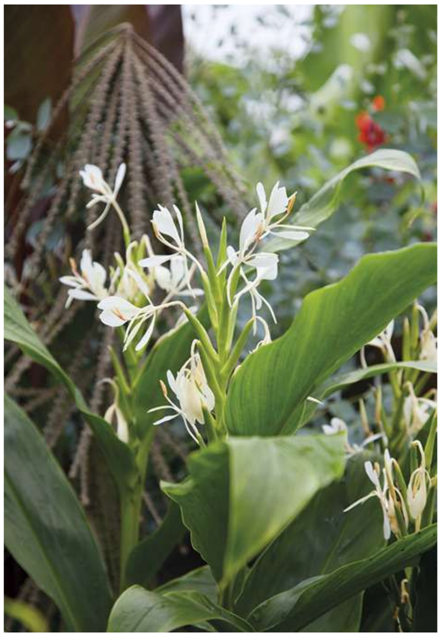












***PERSICARIA VIRGINIANA* ‘BRUSHSTROKES’**
A hardy, clump-forming perennial. The rich-green foliage turns an attractive olive green when stressed. Happy in sun or part-to-deep shade. 60cm. USDA 4a-8b.

***CANNA* ‘GENERAL EISENHOWER’**
Deep purple from tip to toe with rippling broad muscular leaves. Large, thick-petalled, reddish orange flowers that seem to float above the body like exotic handkerchiefs. 2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

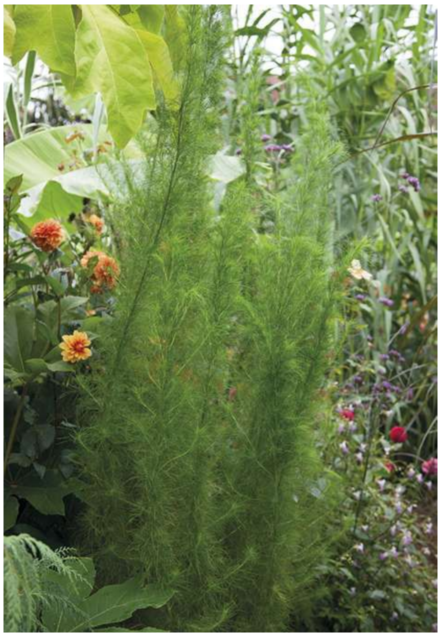
***HEDYCHIUM* ‘HELEN DILLON’**
Glossy green leaves, paler on the undersides, and softened with a fine bloom on the young growth. Loose, almost orchid-like, white flowers with a central apricot stamen, appear from late summer. 2m. USDA 7b-11.

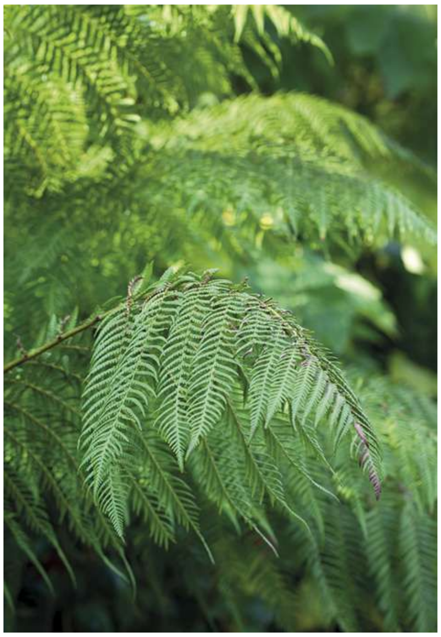
Ferny or filigree textures

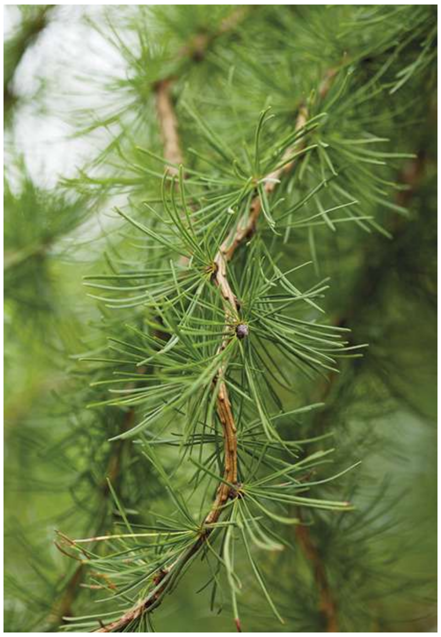
EUPATORIUM CAPILLIFOLIUM
Upright stems covered in a soft filigree of almost threadlike, fresh-green leaves, making a vibrant emerald column late into the summer. Insignificant flowers are greyish white. 2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 3a-10a.

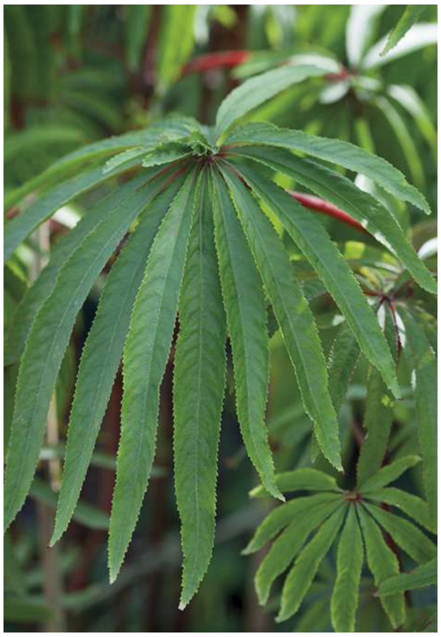
DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA
A hairy trunk supports a wide, lacy umbrella of finely divided, fresh green fronds radiating from a central hairy crown. The leaves are borne in flushes unravelling like dainty green sails. 2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

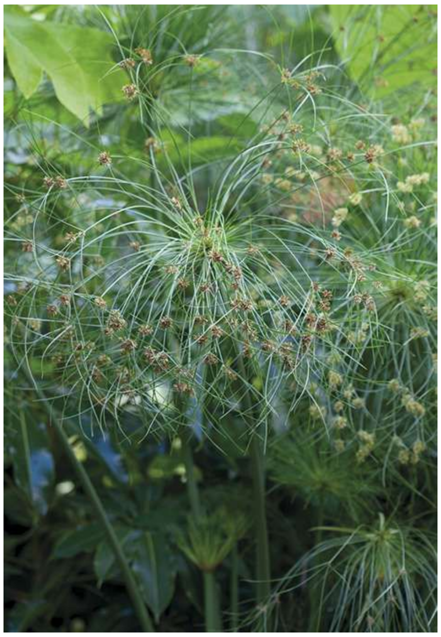
***LARIX DECIDUA* 'HORSTMANN RECURVED'**
A zany mutant of the European larch with branches twisting as if they've been in curlers. Grey-green needles turn golden before falling in autumn. 5m. USDA 2a-8b.

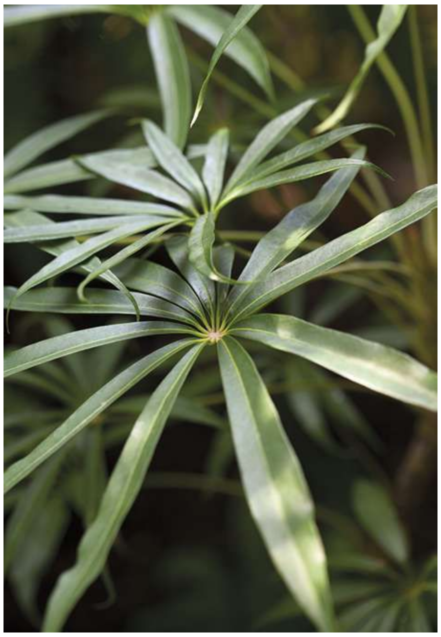












BEGONIA LUXURIANS
A zig-zag of alternating side branches splay out from reddish canes, supporting large palm-like leaves made up of several drooping leaflets. White flowers are borne in late summer. 2m. AGM. RHS H1B, USDA 9a-11.

CYPERUS PAPYRUS
A Dr Seuss plant with triangular stems, on top of which float rounded clusters of long, arching threads, making a pendulous tuft of bright green that end in golden-brown sedge flowers. 2m. AGM. RHS H1A, USDA 9a-10b.

SCHEFFLERA TAIWANIANA
An evergreen, multi-stemmed shrub with parasols of digitate leaves comprising 11 deep-green fingers. White flowers are followed by black fruit. Happy in sun or part shade. 3m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 9b-10a.

BEGONIA FOLIOSA* VAR. *MINIATA
Petite, glossy green, ovate leaves set in layers on upright, slightly arching red-tinged stems. An ungainly yet delicate structure, off which hang clusters of fuchsia-like flowers. 75cm. AGM. RHS H1B, USDA 9a-11.

DRYOPTERIS WALLICHIANA
The most reptilian of all hardy ferns. Its tri-pinnate leaves, widest in the middle, have regularly spaced, yellow-green pinnules, contrasting with the charcoal black midrib. 1m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-10a.

TAGETES LEMMONII
Pinnate leaves of up to five leaflets exude a strong aroma. Small, orange-yellow daisy-like flowers are produced throughout the autumn into winter. Provides an excellent contrast to bolder foliage. 2m. USDA 8a-11.

***TAGETES LEMMONII* 'MARTIN'S MUTANT'**
Its puckered, feathery, grey foliage, makes this an exceptionally handsome filigree bush. Weaker in growth than its parent, but valuable thanks to its billowy texture. Likes sun or part shade. 1m. USDA 8a-11.

Winter protection

Not all exotic plants need to be moved to a snug greenhouse kept hot and humid throughout the winter. Hardy plants, such as paulownias, eucalyptus, *Schefflera taiwaniana*, *Persicaria virginiana* 'Brushstrokes', *Amicia zygomeris* and *Dryopteris wallichiana*, stay out all year round. Some, such as *Hedychium* 'Helen Dillon', can remain out if protected by heavy mulch. At Dixter we wrap the trunk of the hardy Japanese banana tree *Musa basjoo* in a thick layer of fern fronds, which are held in place with bamboo canes (if fern fronds are scarce then straw or hay will do).

Some plants simply need a frost-free shelter. Cannas and dahlias can be stored dormant in a dark cellar or garage. The soil cleaned off their roots and packed into crates with a bit of sawdust or bark, they can sit here all winter long – only to be split and potted up into fresh compost the following spring (don't split in autumn or the tubers may rot). The begonias, manihots, trevesias, cyperus, saccharums and colocasias go into a warmer environment – a hothouse or conservatory with minimum winter temperature of 10ºC. They are kept growing, regularly watered and well ventilated to keep good air circulation (keeping down diseases). A drier cooler house where temperatures are at a winter low of 5ºC, holds many of the cacti and succulents, including cussonias. There is little watering here as many of these plants shut off for the winter. Again good ventilation is vital.

Where to see

Whether it's North America's Sonoran Desert or the dripping rainforests of Costa Rica, the wild is the best place to see exotic plants, but here are some of the best gardens to find them in captivity.

- **Botanicactus**
  07640 Ses Salines, Mallorca, Spain.
  Tel +34 619 119 676,
  botanicactus.com
  One of Europe's largest botanic

gardens with extensive plantings of cacti and Mediterranean plants.

- **Chanticleer**
  786 Church Road Wayne,
  PA 19087, USA.
  Tel +1 610 687 4163,
  chanticleergarden.org
  Dan Benarcik has tended the courtyard garden here over a number of years with an emphasis on tropicals and subtropicals.
- **Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens**
  Cotswold Wildlife Park, Bradwell Grove, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4JP.
  Tel 01993 823006,
  cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk
  Tim Miles's displays are always colourful, and perfectly put together.
- **The Desert Garden**
  The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108, USA.
  Tel +1 610 687 4163, huntington.org
  One of the largest collections of cacti and succulents in the world.
- **Dino Pellizzaro's Nursery**
  290 Chemin Leouse,
  06220 Vallauris, France.
  Tel +33 (0)4 93 64 18 43.
  Situated up a steep slope, this little treasure is open only by appointment. Dino is one of the most charismatic and knowledgeable plantsmen in the world today.
- **Palm House, Kew**
  Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,
  Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB.
  Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org
  An afternoon in here really does take you to the tropics. The structure itself is something to be marvelled, let alone the wonderful collection of plants from all over the world.

Where to buy

See page 94.

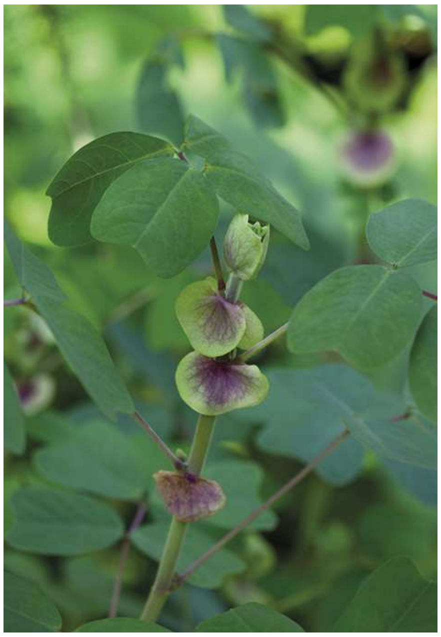
Further reading

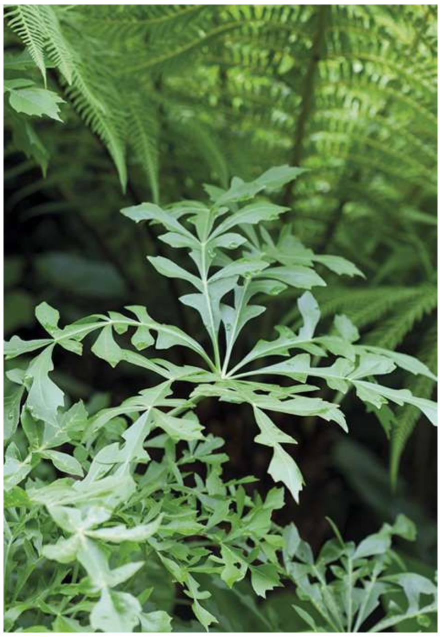
Exotica: A Pictorial Cyclopedia of Exotic Plants from Tropical and Near-Tropic Regions by Dr Alfred Byrd Graf (Roehrs, 1982). A classic book with over 16,300 photographs by one of the world's great botanists.

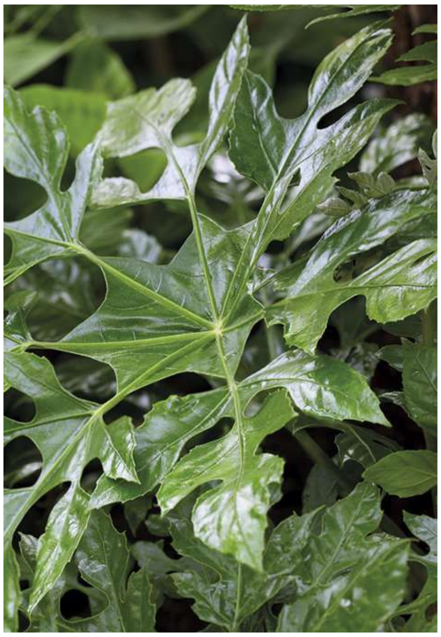
Quirks and unusual shapes

AMICIA ZYGOMERIS
A Mexican curiosity with multiple stems, clasped at intervals by purple-stained stipules. Alternating leaves made up of four pinnate leaflets, which shut at night, are held at right angles. 2.5m. RHS H4, USDA 7b-9b.

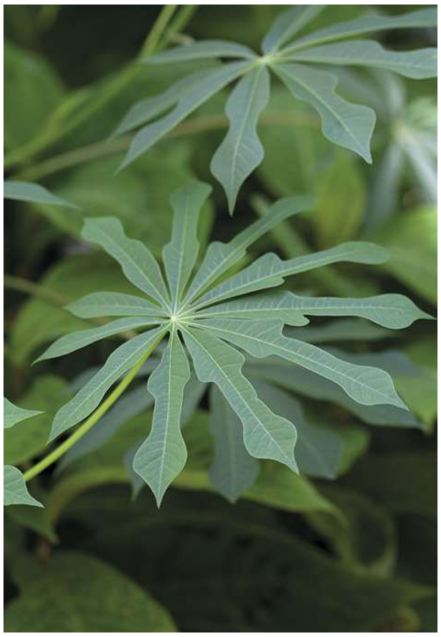
CUSSONIA PANICULATA
A distinctive pachycaul succulent with glaucous-blue leaves made up of many leaflets that give the impression of a grey-blue spider's web carried on top of a singular woody stem. 5m. USDA 9a-11.







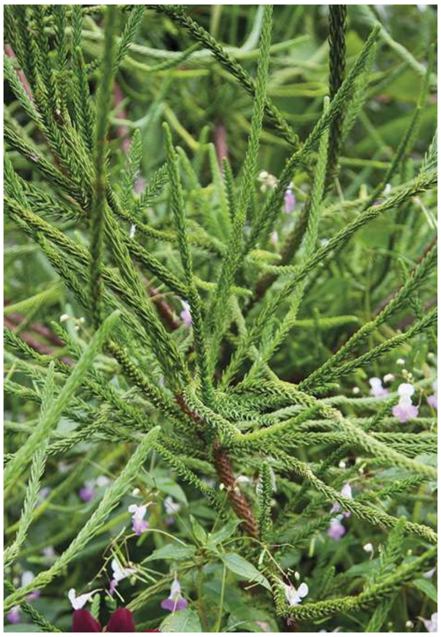
TREVESIA PALMATA
Known as the snowflake tree because of its deeply lobed leaves that resemble a large snowflake. Looks almost prehistoric when its young unfurling shoots are covered with silver tomentum. 3m. USDA 9b-11.



MANIHOT GRAHAMII
Extraordinary foliage plant layered with enormous, lobed, deeply indented palmate leaves resulting in noteworthy negative space. Flowers are muted, greenish-yellow bells. 3m. USDA 9b-11.

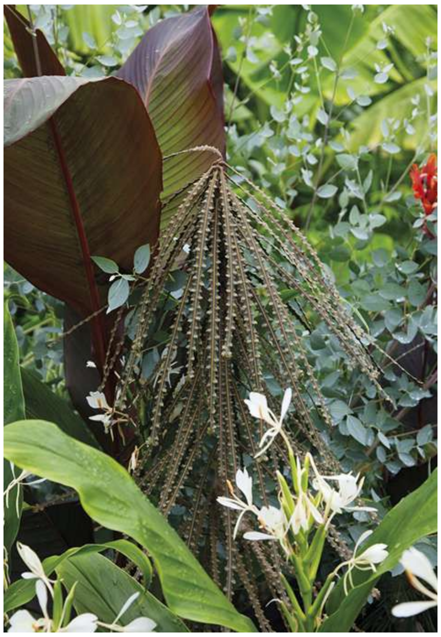
***CRYPTOMERIA JAPONICA* ARAUCARIOIDES GROUP**

An irregular, zany conifer, with whip-like branches scaled in adpressed, dark-green needles, resulting in stems that have a rope-like appearance. 2.5m. USDA 6a-8b.



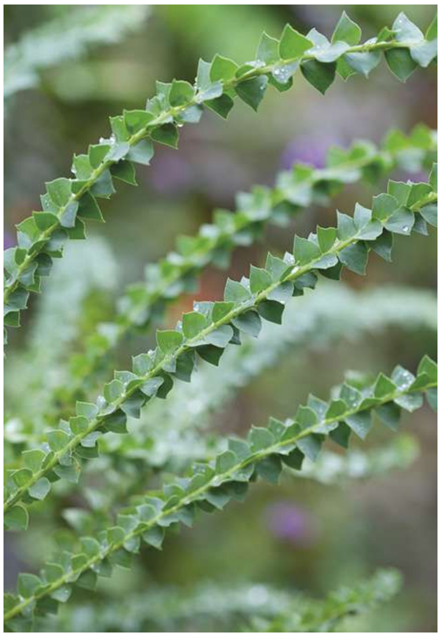
PSEUDOPANAX FEROX

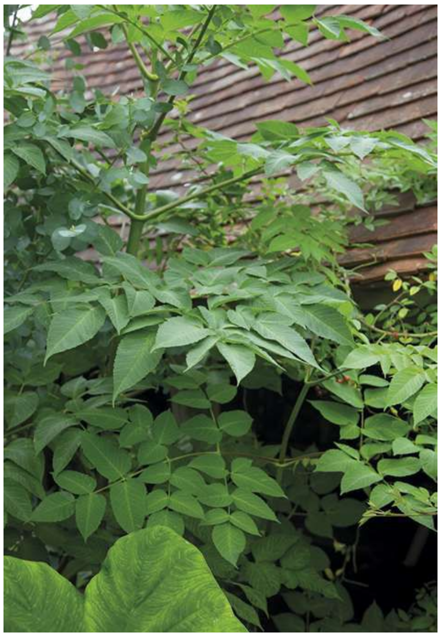
An unusual plant with saw-toothed, grey-brown, evergreen leaves, which hang, sweeping down, around a deep-grooved stem. As they mature, the leaves get broader shorter and greener. 4m. USDA 8b-10b.



ACACIA PRAVISSIMA

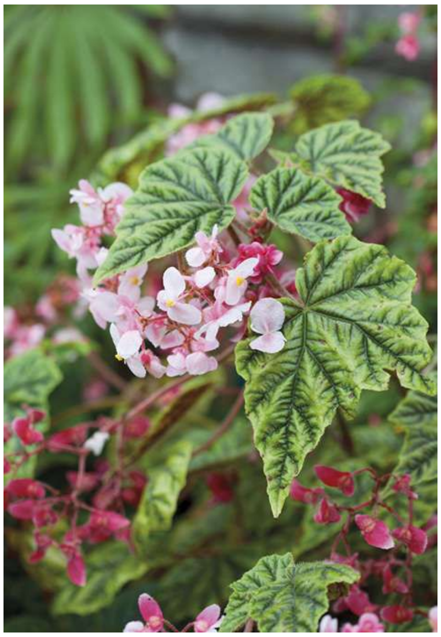
A dainty, evergreen tree, with lightly arching stems decorated in triangular, alternating glaucous phyllodes that sit at right angles to each other, giving a prickly appearance. 5m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.





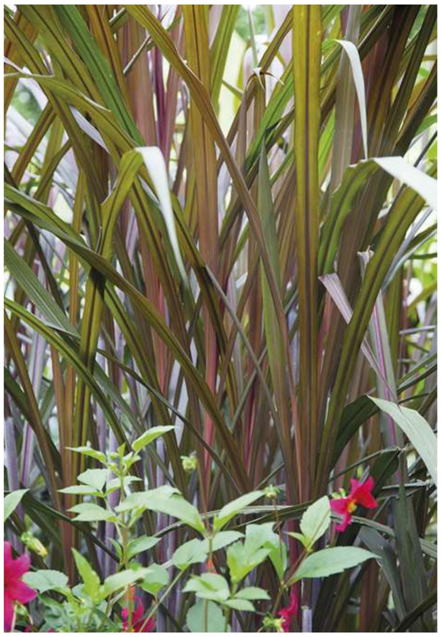
DAHLIA IMPERIALIS

The tree dahlia is a giant, with stems as thick as scaffolding poles and immense tri-pinnate leaves over 1m long and wide. Frost free, it flowers all winter long from October with single pink blooms. 8m. USDA 7a-9b.



BEGONIA METALLICA

Deep-veined, asymmetrical leaves are olive green with undersides of pinkish red. The flowers are pale pink and in large clusters. Lights up the darkest corners with its heavy gloss. 60cm. AGM. USDA 10a-11.



SACCHARUM OFFICINARUM* VAR. *VIOLACEUM

Upright stems have strong, keeled leaves, which create a fountain of burgundy and silver that moves and rustles in the wind. Comes alive when backlit. 3m. USDA 8a-10b.

A cut above

Take inspiration from these four floral collections put together for us by the talented gardener and florist James Horner

WORDS FRANCINE RAYMOND
PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Some gardeners are difficult to pigeon-hole, especially if they have more than one string to their bow. James Horner falls into this category. Sometimes a flower gardener, occasionally planting designer and often floral stylist, James is a horticultural polyglot.

After studying Environmental Art, he worked for the parks department at Leeds City Council and found himself helping to plant medal-winning show gardens at Chelsea. In 2010 he successfully applied for the first Christopher Lloyd Scholarship at Great Dixter in East Sussex. He lived in the house and worked in the garden, where life was both exciting and nerve-wracking: fulfilling idiosyncratic planting schemes; carrying out meticulous propagating procedures; and attending symposiums.

In 2012, the designer Luciano Giubbilei began working on a 25m experimental plot at Great Dixter and James became his assistant. He subsequently worked on Giubbilei's 2014 Laurent-Perrier garden at the Chelsea Flower Show, which won Best in Show, and continues to collaborate with the designer on planting schemes throughout Europe.

Back in England, James has been experimenting with different planting schemes and materials for his fledgling floristry projects, growing his test-bed flowers in a walled garden in East Sussex. And what flowers they are. All Dixter gardeners are trained to have a good eye and fizzing energy, using a dynamic palette of colour and texture, then questioning, re-building and filling gaps.

In the beds, structure is provided by huge umbels; movement by flowing climbers and trailers; softness by grasses to contrast floral spires; fragrance is added with scented flowers and leaves; and punctuation with grandstanders – all principles as relevant to floristry as to garden planting.

"If you grow your own flowers you have control over your materials, when they are harvested and displayed, and can always work with plants in season," says James. "I started by growing all my plants together like a romantic Dixter stock bed, but now I grow them in rows as well." He makes floral installations for fashion shows and wild bunches for celebrations.

"Gardens have their limitations; you make pictures faster in floristry," he explains. "It's the combination I love. It's a privilege to plan a garden, to grow the flowers from seed and then to turn them into something unforgettable." □

Turn the page for four fabulous cut flower combinations chosen by James ▷

Porcelain

1 *Dahlia* 'White Ballet'
The lemon centre of this water lily-type bloom glows. James digs up his dahlia tubers in late autumn to make space for tulips. 70cm. AGM[*]. RHS H3[†].

2 *Dahlia* 'Café au Lait'
A hugely popular variety. Its giant, beige-centred, pink-hued flowers are the centrepiece for late-season bridal bouquets. 70cm. RHS H3.

3 *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* var. *alba* 'Korean Snow'
Adds drama to a bouquet with its cotton-coloured dangling tassels. Cut these burnets when fresh, then dry for winter arrangements. 80cm.

4 *Clematis* 'Bill MacKenzie'
A fantastically vigorous climber used for both its lemon peel-like, nodding flowers and for its silver, wind-blown seedheads, which provide textural softness. 5m. AGM. RHS H6.

5 *Francoa ramosa* 'Alba'
Treat this tender perennial as a pot plant. Come July it throws up fairy wands of white stems full of flowers and will add elegant lines to any arrangement. 50cm.

6 *Bidens aurea* 'Mexican White'
Simple yet elegant ivory flowers on tall stems. Invasive in the garden but a useful addition to late summer bouquets. 80cm.

7 *Rubus* 'Benenden'
Plantsman Cherry Ingram's prodigy, named after the Kent village where he lived. A fleeting, white shrub from the *Rosaceae* family with vigorous thornless branches smothered in flowers. Ideal for large arrangements. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5.

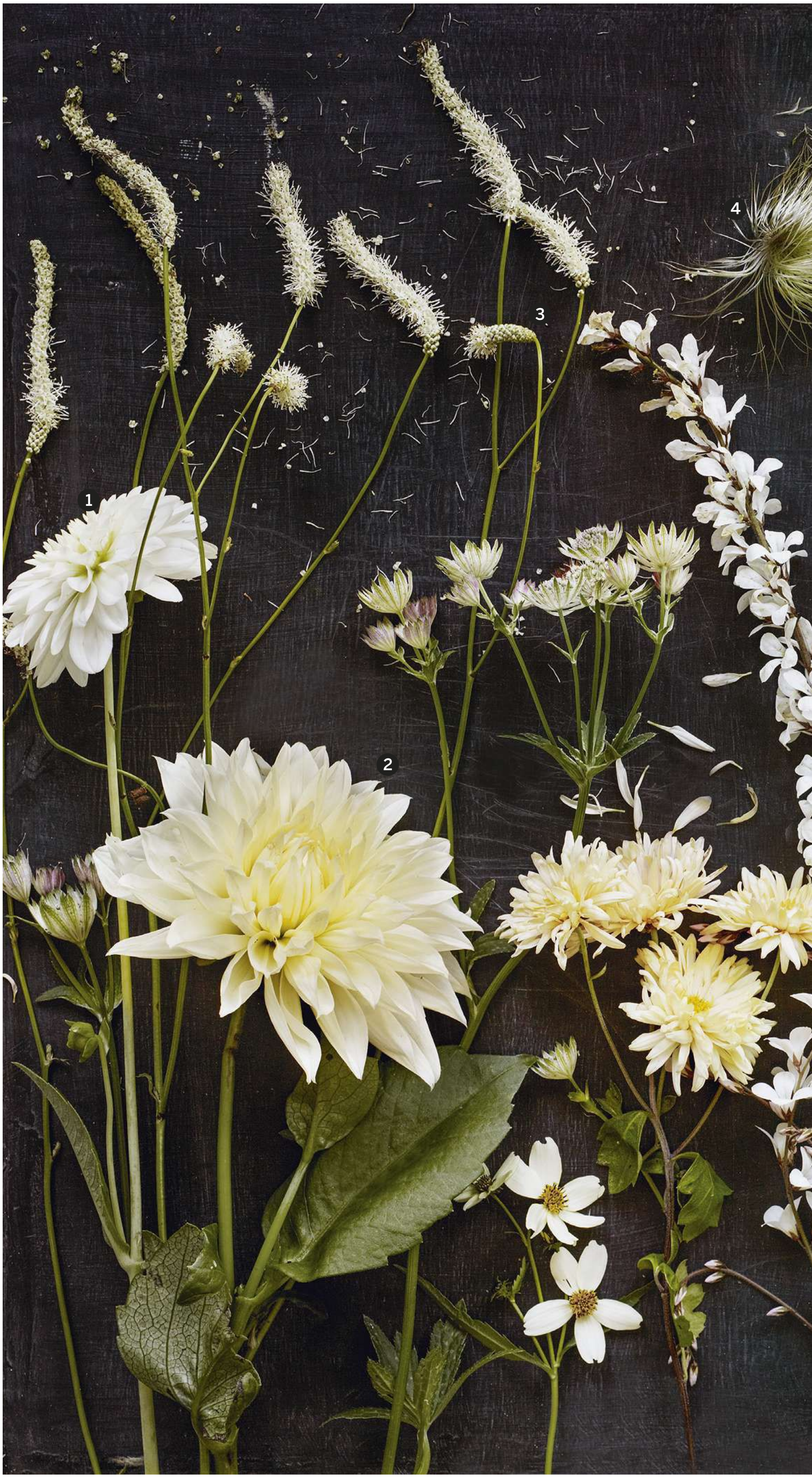
8 *Solanum laxum* 'Coldham'
A favourite for its icy-blue buds opening to white flowers. Flowers until frosts, a rampant climber. Adds a watery cascade to bunches. 6m.

9 *Eryngium ebracteatum* var. *poterioides*
Burnet-like flowers of sea holly. Could be mistaken for sanguisorba, but the foliage is spiky with stiff stems and dark, thimble-like bobbles. 60cm.

10 *Chrysanthemum* 'Esther'
Frilly, double, apricot-coloured, long flowerer bred by Joe Sharman at Monksilver Nursery. A relaxed foil for dahlias in late summer vases. 60cm.

11 *Ammi visnaga*
Fern-like foliage and lacy umbels. Treat as a hardy annual. Good structural seedheads persist through winter. A light filler to partner other flowers. 80cm.

12 *Astrantia major* white seedling
From nurseryman Graham Gough at Marchants Hardy Plants. A reliable cut flower that repeat flowers and can be dried. 40cm.



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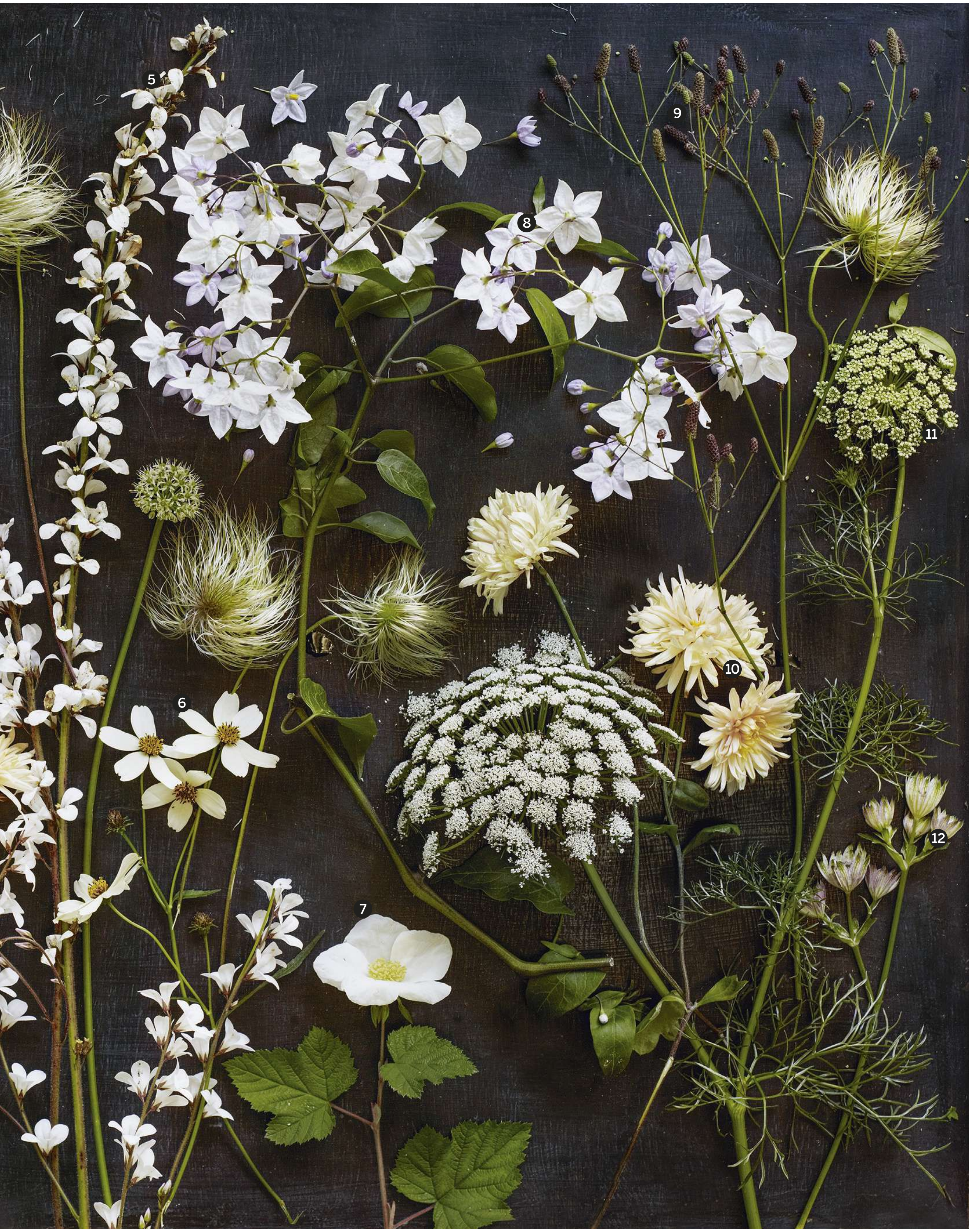
[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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Port wine

1 ***Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*** **var.** ***horizontalis***
Horizontal calico aster that Christopher Lloyd cleverly used to replace a failing lavender hedge at Great Dixter. Delicate pink-eyed daisies by the thousands. 40cm. AGM. RHS H7.

2 ***Lespedeza thunbergii***
Given a warm situation this late-flowering shrub will be covered with purple pendulous, branches popular with late bees. Useful for its trailing habit. 80cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

3 ***Sanguisorba tenuifolia*** **'Henk Gerritsen'**
A robust burnet with tens of flower stems, thick with slightly pendulous, antennae-like, burgundy burrs. Its slightly unpleasant smell dissipates when dried. 1.6m.

4 ***Daucus carota*** **'Dara'**
This pink seed strain of the wild carrot can be grown as a biennial on lighter soils. The jewel-like flowers are backed with lacy foliage. Very useful for cutting, so make lots of sowings. 60cm.

5 ***Dahlia*** **'Karma Choc'**
The best dark chocolate dahlia after 'Sam Hopkins'. Its strong stems are ideal for bouquet work. 50cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

6 ***Vitis vinifera*** **'Purpurea'**
If given a hot wall this vine produces port wine-coloured foliage with an aged, mahogany tone. Let its festoons trail beyond the vase. 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

7 ***Origanum laevigatum*** **'Herrenhausen'**
Its aromatic foliage is a magnet for bees. The short stems and purple flowers are great in wilder bouquets. 30cm. AGM. RHS H7.

8 ***Setaria macrostachya*** **'Will Scarlet'**
A short annual grass that self seeds promiscuously in a dry garden. Its moody caramel-coloured seedheads are perfect in an autumn bouquet. 40cm.

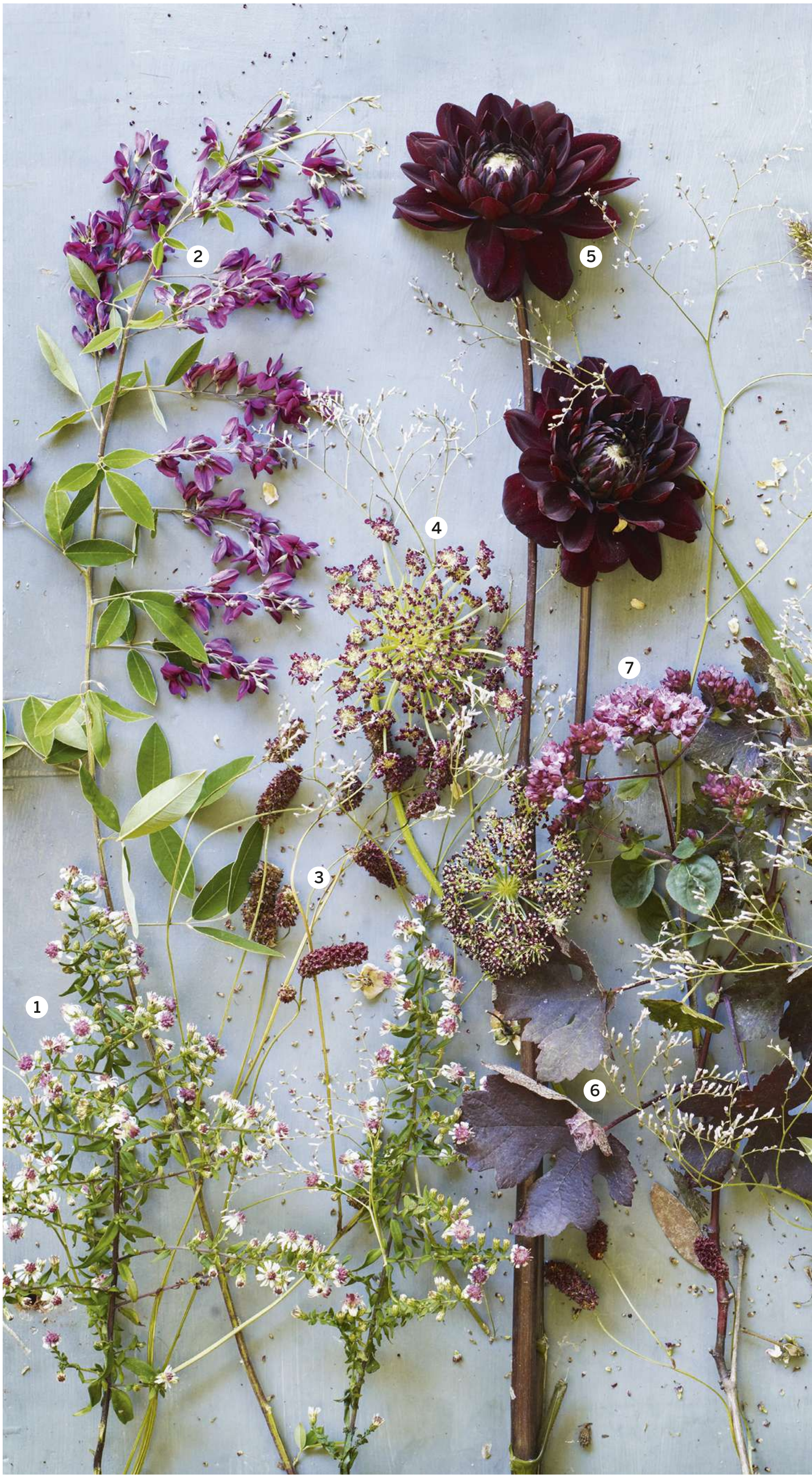
9 ***Limonium platyphyllum***
Perennial statice offering a perfect lacy veil for the border and the bouquet. Dries beautifully for a winter decoration. 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

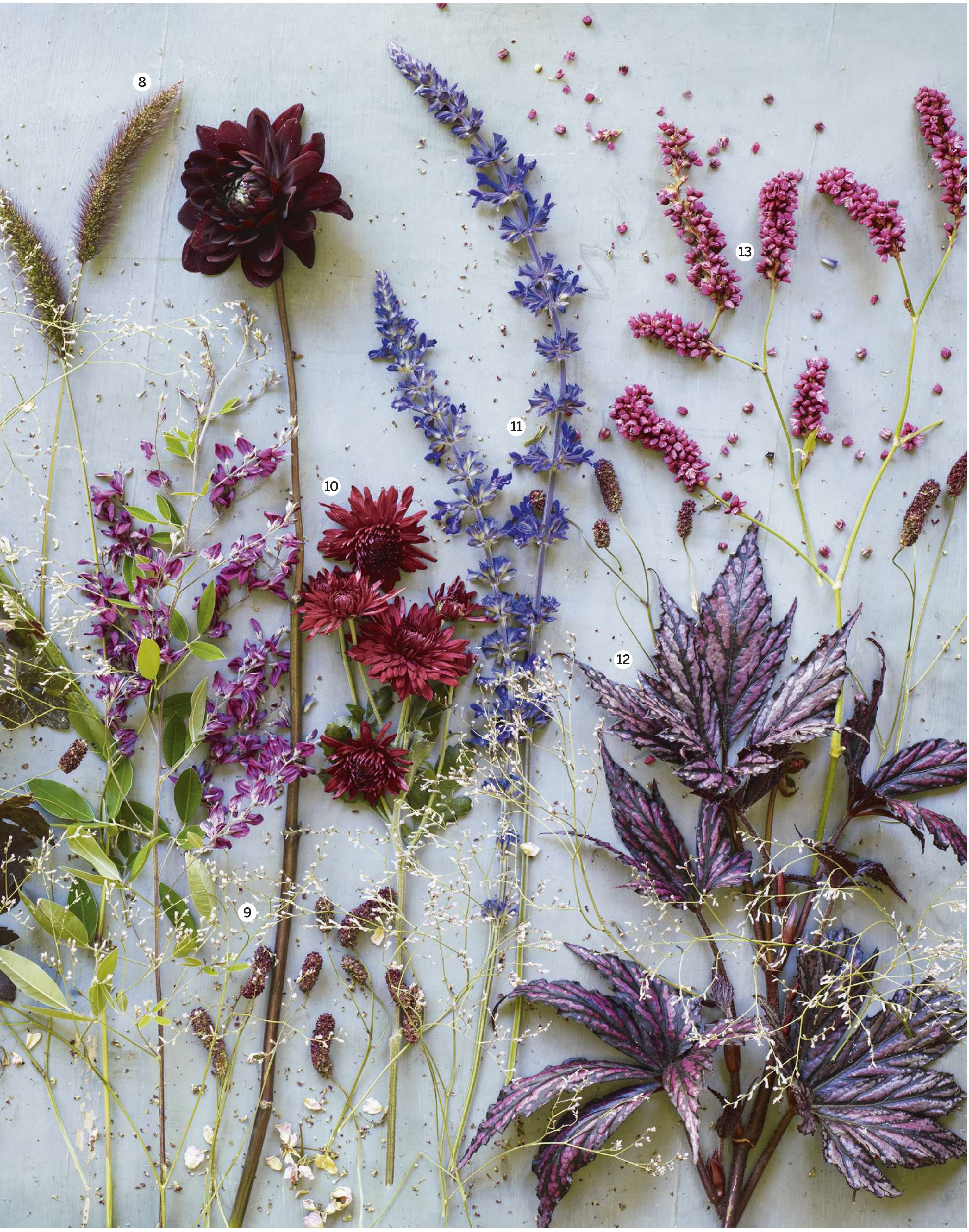
10 ***Chrysanthemum*** **'Ruby Mound'**
This hardy chrysanthemum lasts well in the border and the house. Refresh water to prolong vase life. 50cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.

11 ***Salvia*** **'Indigo Spires'**
A favourite tender sage for summer displays. Tall, snaking, blue spires add height to arrangements. Propagate by cuttings in summer. 60cm.

12 ***Begonia*** **'Benitochiba'**
Grow as a houseplant and move outside to enjoy the summer. The foliage has iridescent and metallic markings that add mystery and drama to exotic arrangements. 30cm. AGM. RHS H1B.

13 ***Persicaria orientalis***
Also wonderfully known as kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate, this is the perfect annual flower for hanging installations, or dried bunches. 1.5m.

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Rust

1 *Chasmanthium latifolium*
Evocative of late summer ripeness, this is a wild oat grass with diamond-shaped, flat florets on arching stems. These are stunning added to hand-tied bouquets. 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

2 *Glycyrrhiza yunnanensis*
It's the intricate seedheads of this airy perennial that warrant inclusion in the garden. They will persist all winter. 1.5m. RHS H5.

3 *Actaea simplex* (Atropurpurea Group) 'Brunette'
The sweetly scented, white-spired actaea with dark foliage, goes on to produce a spectacular seedhead that adds structural depth to an arrangement. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

4 *Dahlia coccinea* 'Mary Keen'
Bright, yet rich burgundy single, acquired by Great Dixter from Mary Keen. Easy and reliable in the garden; fleeting and informal in the vase. 70cm.

5 *Chrysanthemum* 'Salmon Allouise'
A favourite of James's who, as a boy, grew cuttings of chrysanthemums with his uncle. The inward-curving petals make it an attractive addition to bouquets, and large blooms make excellent stand-alone feature flowers. 70cm.

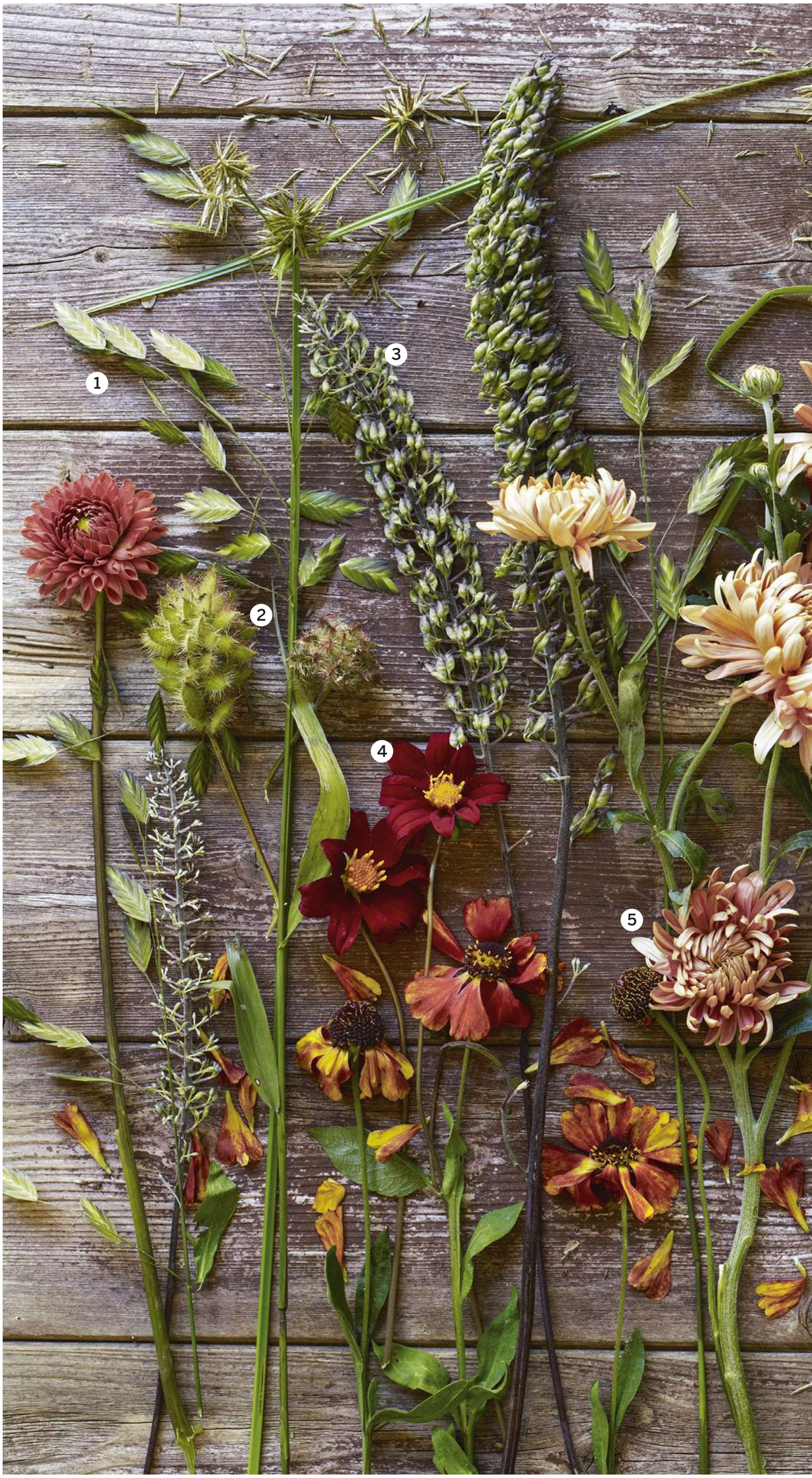
6 *Cyperus vegetus*
A plant that self-sows nicely and makes gardening easy. The strong triangular stems are topped with an umbrella-like explosion of sword leaves and seeds. 40cm.

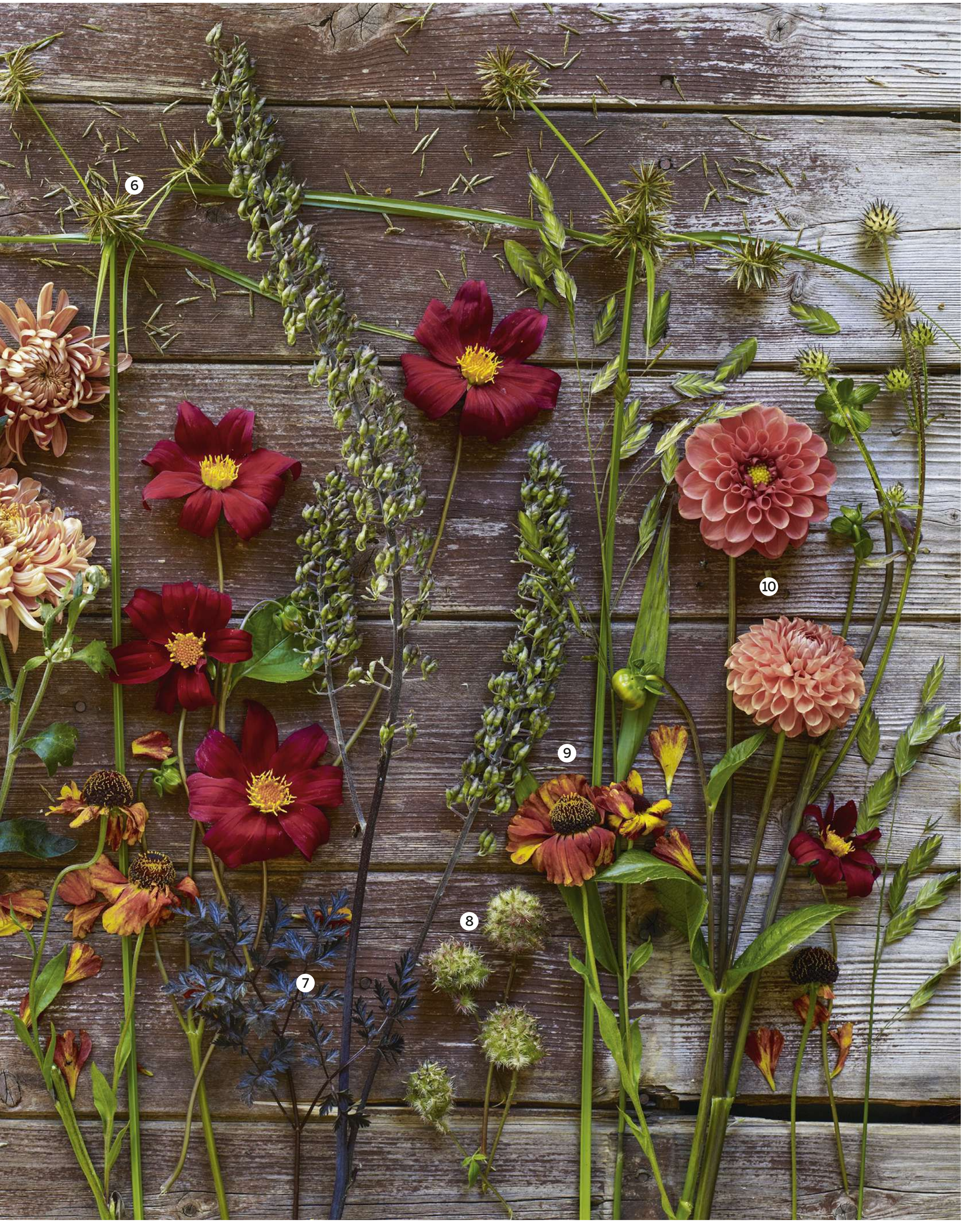
7 *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'
A dark-leaved cow parsley with frothy white flowers, evocative of English country lanes in spring. Adds lustre to bouquets. 60cm. RHS H6.

8 *Dipsacus pilosus*
The small teasel, with its surround of minute, fur-like hairs, is one of the best plants to catch the evening light. Adds texture and interest to a bouquet, but doesn't out-shine the star attractions. Biennial. 1.5m.

9 *Helenium* 'Sahin's Early Flowerer'
Without doubt one of the best heleniums to date, excellent for its repeat flowering. The second flush is particularly well suited to October tones. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7.

10 *Dahlia* 'Cornel Brons'
Along with its red sister, known simply as 'Cornel', this dahlia performs well, producing bloom after bloom. A tight, long-lasting cut flower with a colour range that goes from pumpkin to bronze to slightly salmon. 80cm.

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Hay

1 *Sanguisorba* 'Pink Brushes'
A burnet that starts out lilac pink and fluffy, then fades. The tall stems carry flowers that look like tiny windsocks. 1.2m

2 *Miscanthus* 'Saturnia'
James picked up this grass at Le Jardin Plume in Normandy for its outstanding silver feathers and solid stature. Use miscanthus freshly cut and dried in Christmas wreaths. 2m.

3 *Aster glehnii*
An unusual aster with large heads of fizzing florets of white-petalled daisies. Lasts well into early autumn and forms attractive seedheads. 1.7m.

4 *Sorghum nigrum*
This striking black millet cereal grass is grown as an annual, the seeds darkening as they ripen in October. Can also be used fresh and green. 1.2m.

5 *Artemisia lactiflora*
Cream plumes that stand tall and support louder partners in the border and bouquet. Grows best in moist soils. 1.4m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

6 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
James first noticed this dried grass in a huge bunch in a vase in the hall at Great Dixter, and it inspired his dream to bring the garden inside and to work as a florist. 1.5m. RHS H7.

7 *Cestrum parqui*
A shrub needing a sheltered spot, where it's happy to grow abundantly. Its long tubular flowers add scent – a precious rarity in late summer – but be careful as all its parts are toxic. 1.6m. AGM. RHS H3.

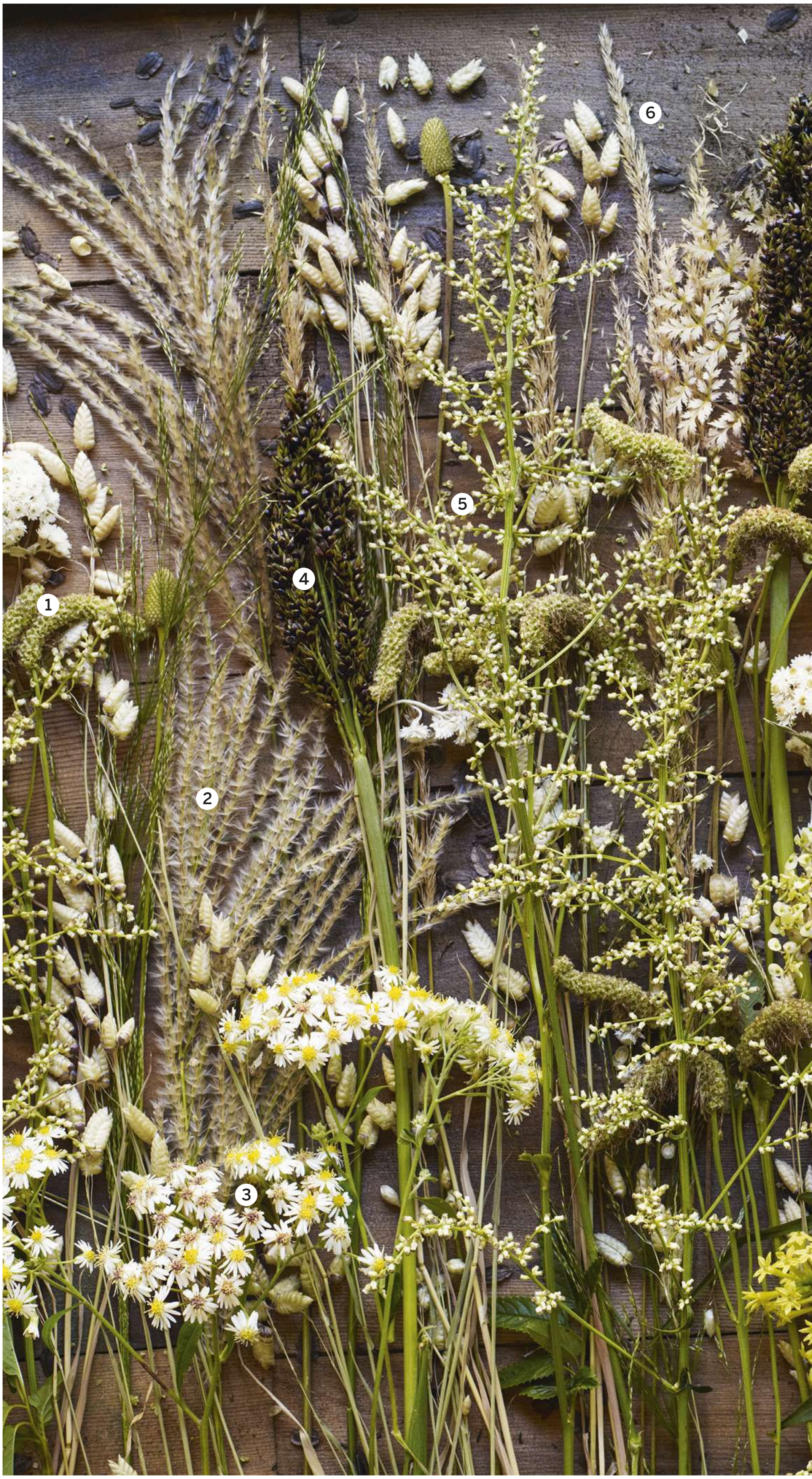
8 *Patrinia* aff. *punctiflora*
Biennial, easily raised from seed, with a flowering structure similar to *Verbena bonariensis*. The flowers first colour lime green, then fade to pale yellow before papery seedheads develop and last all winter. 1m.

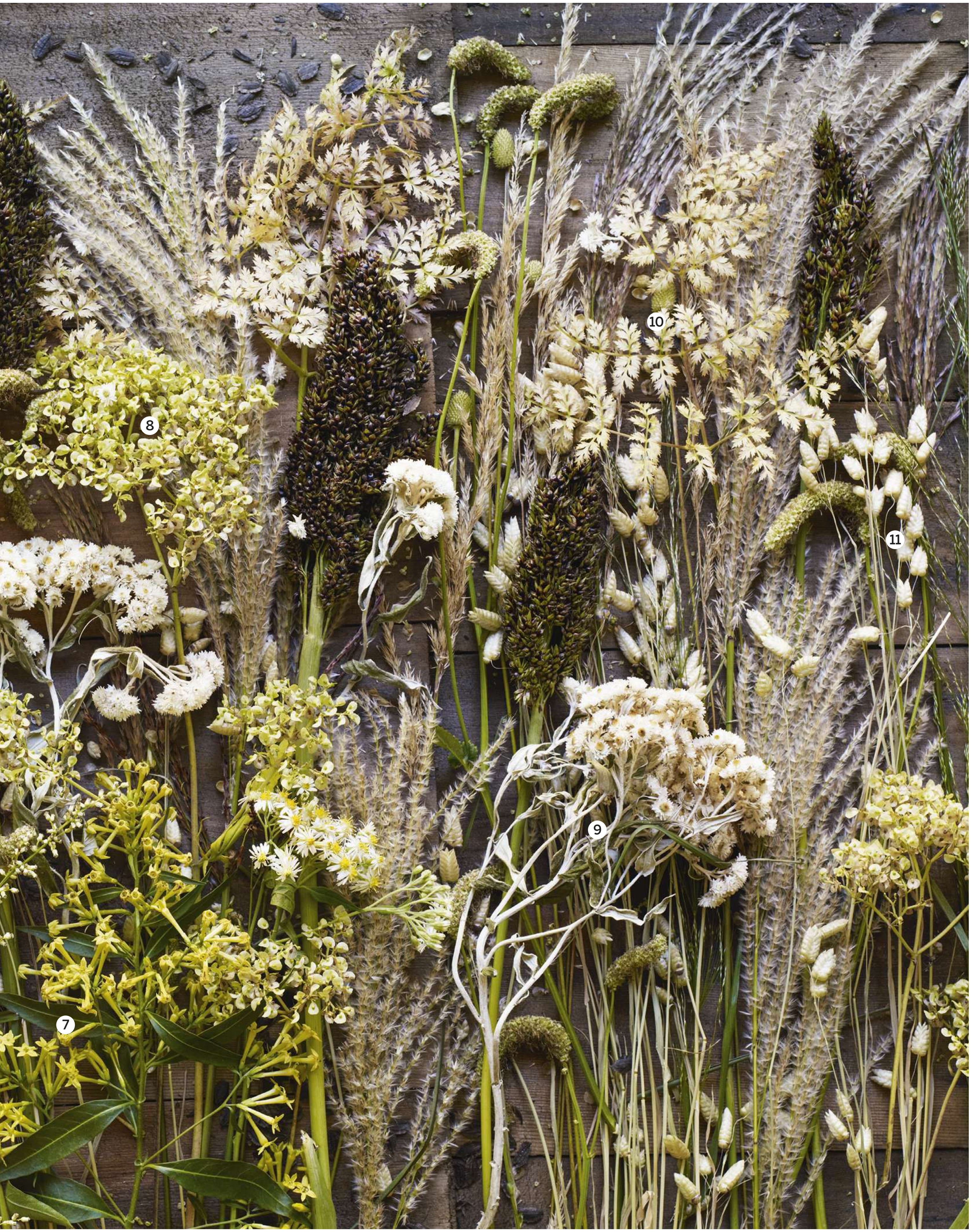
9 *Anaphalis margaritacea* var. *yedoensis*
An easy-to-grow perennial with white everlasting flowers. Ideal to pick fresh or use when dry (tie in a bunch and hang somewhere airy). 80cm. RHS H7.

10 *Selinum wallichianum*
Foliage of a stately perennial from the umbellifer tribe, which flowers abundantly. Some forms have beautiful purple stems. 1.5m. RHS H7.

11 *Briza maxima*
Can be used with other dried grasses in a seasonal table dressing. Worth noting that if briza are dried hanging upside down they will lose their charming nodding ways. Annual and self-sowing. 60cm. RHS H6.

Find out more about James's floristry business at jameshornerfloristry.com
• For where to buy plants see page 94.

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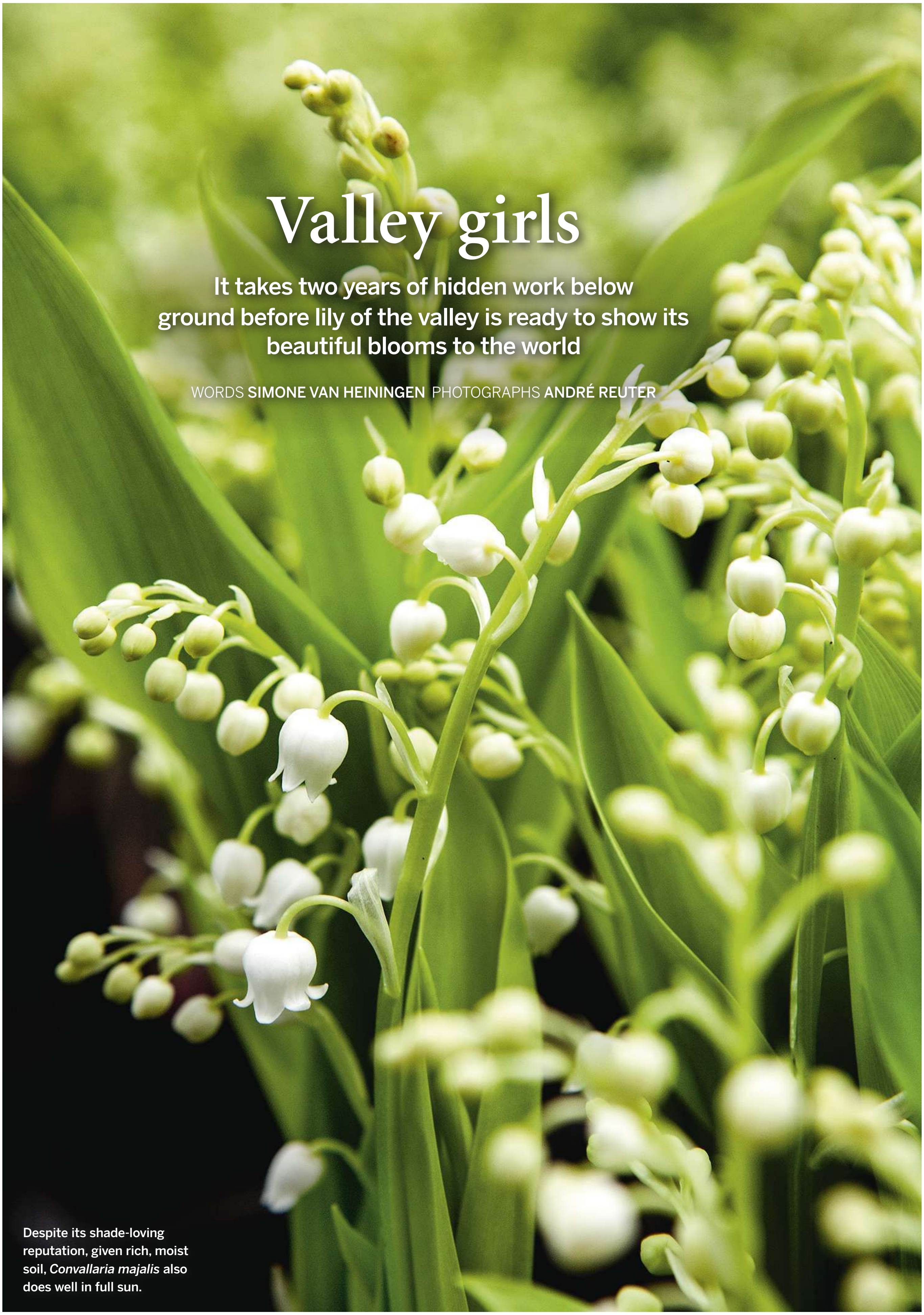
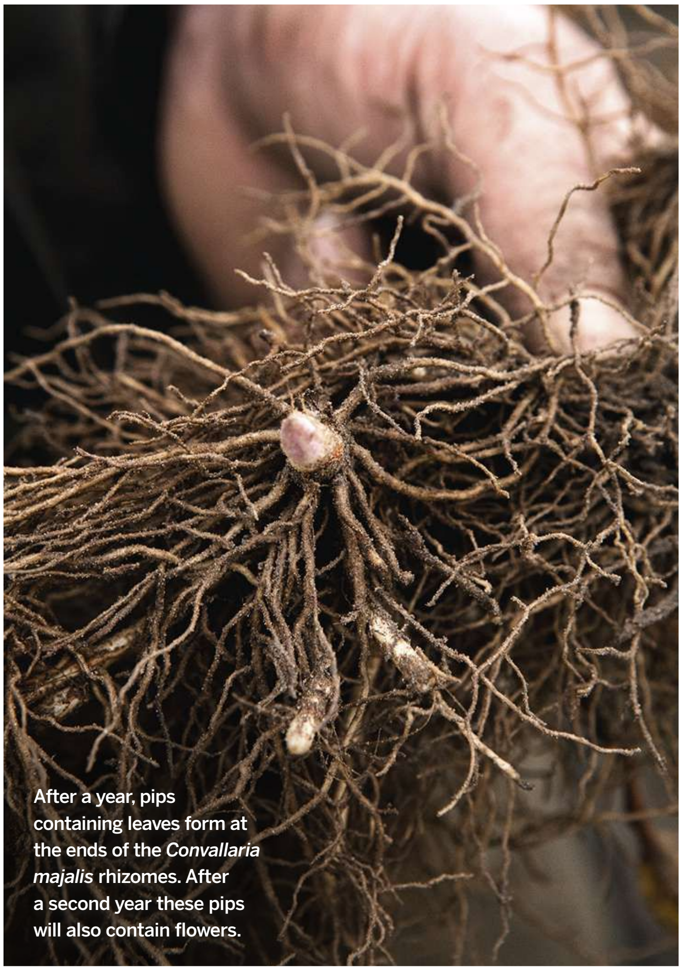


Valley girls

It takes two years of hidden work below ground before lily of the valley is ready to show its beautiful blooms to the world

WORDS **SIMONE VAN HEININGEN** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDRÉ REUTER**

Despite its shade-loving reputation, given rich, moist soil, *Convallaria majalis* also does well in full sun.



After a year, pips containing leaves form at the ends of the *Convallaria majalis* rhizomes. After a second year these pips will also contain flowers.

Mathias Peters, like many farmers in this area of northern Germany, grows *Convallaria majalis* as a side business to his dairy farm.

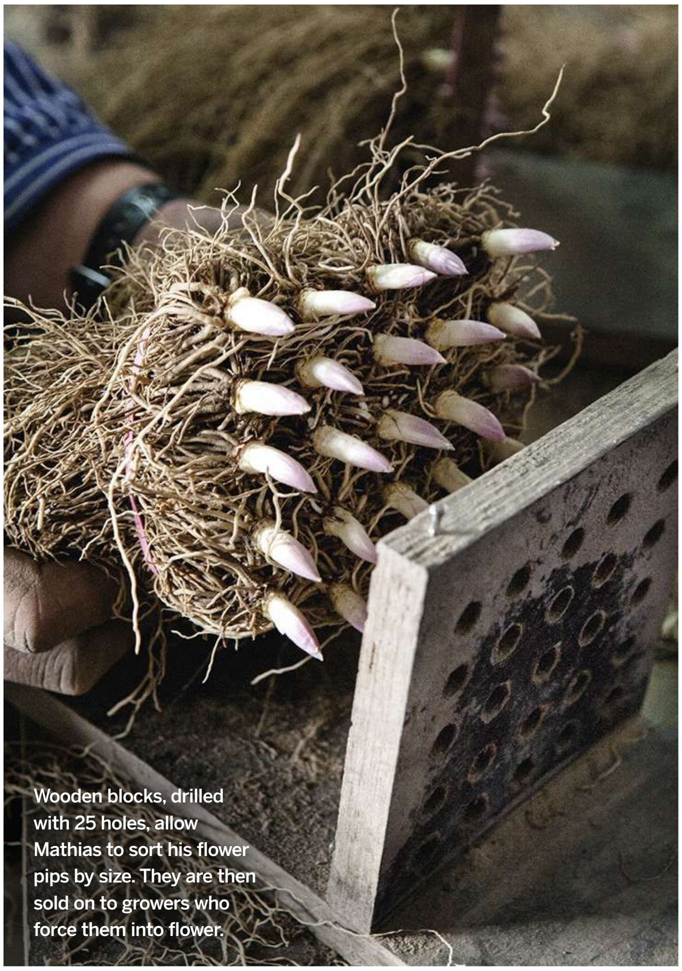
"She is a bit of a diva," says Mathias Peters explaining the tender loving care he bestows on his *Convallaria majalis*. Mathias is the fifth generation of farmers in this part of northern Germany who have dedicated part of the family dairy farm to growing this particular plant, better known to many as lily of the valley.

In Kirchwerder, between the Elbe and the Gose-Elbe, on the outskirts of Hamburg, German farmers have been growing the plant they call *maiglöckchen* (May bells) for centuries. They are not grown for the flowers, in fact any flower that dares to raise its head above the soil is immediately discarded. Mathias wants nature to concentrate its force below ground. This is where the plant multiplies, sending out rhizomes, at the end of which a 'pip' will work its way up. This pip does not flower in the first year, when it only produces leaves. In its second year, it contains the beginnings of the fragrant, bell-shaped flowers. And it is the rhizomes with the flower pips that Mathias sells, mostly to Dutch traders who sell them on to companies that force Mathias's crop into flower.

"Eighty per cent of the lily of the valley we grow ends up in France," says Mathias. This is because the French are mad for *muguet*, as the plant is commonly known there, where it is traditionally given to loved ones on May Day. In 2015, the French spent €23.6 million on sprigs of lily of the valley. Making sure there is enough supply to meet this huge demand starts at Mathias's farm, among others. Here, the moisture and shade-loving *Convallaria majalis* begins life in surprisingly sandy soil that is exposed to full sunlight. "Some growers experimented with tarpaulins for shade," says Mathias. "However, it didn't make a blind bit of difference."

In late September and October, once the leaves have withered, Mathias harvests his crop. A dainty, little harvester cuts through the tangled mass of fibrous roots, some 20cm below the surface. The rest of the process is carried out by hand. In one of the sheds, the remaining soil is shaken off and the web is untangled into more manageable clumps – if necessary, by impaling it on a spike and pulling hard. Those clumps are then moved to a sorting table, where local women sort the pips into the one-year-olds that only contain leaves – these will be replanted – and the two-year-olds that contain flowers and will be sold. There is a third stack of crates, in which the less-than-excellent rhizomes end up, and Mathias confesses that many of these misfits end up in garden centres across Europe where they are sold on to unsuspecting gardeners.

Distinguishing between a flower pip and a leaves pip is a job done by feel. The experienced fingers of the women gently squeeze the pips, and if it feels as if it contains a tiny marble, they know it's a flower pip. Once sorted, the pips are graded according to size. Wooden blocks, each with 25 holes, represent those different sizes. It's a matter of pushing 25 same-sized pips into those holes and ▷



Wooden blocks, drilled with 25 holes, allow Mathias to sort his flower pips by size. They are then sold on to growers who force them into flower.

Holder
DIESEL

Mathias replants the rhizomes with leaf pips in shallow trenches, then covers them with the soil that is thrown up by his trench digger.

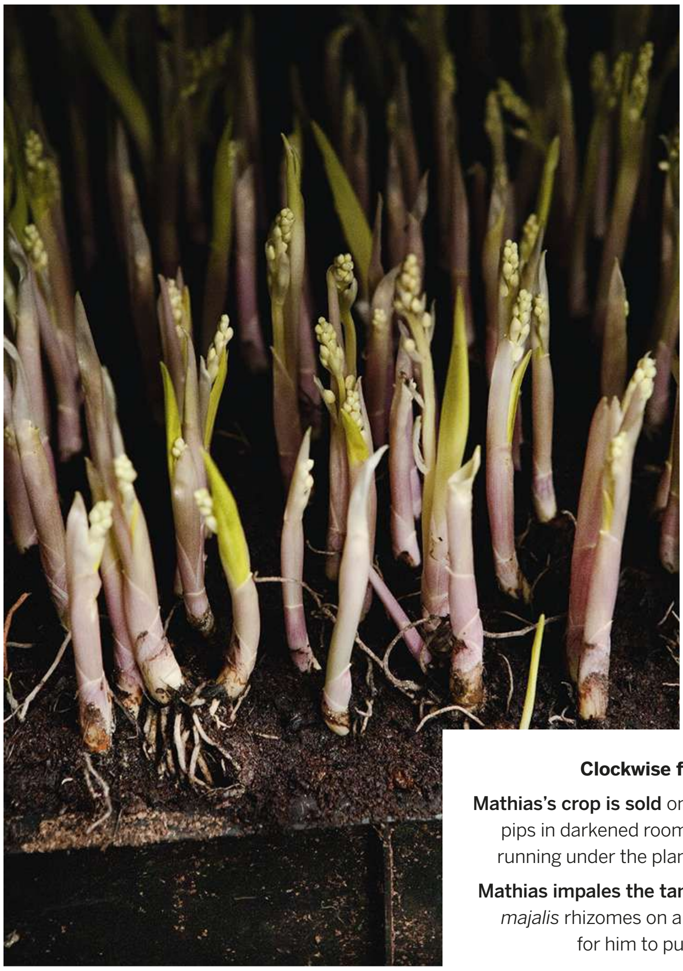
▷ then bundling them up with a rubber band. Although *Convallaria majalis* are not prone to disease, they may contain aphids. "Which is why we then 'cook' them," Mathias explains. "Animal protein dies off at 43.2°C, vegetable protein at 43.3°C. Obviously, we don't want the latter but it is impossible to be that precise with the water temperature. So, we dip the crates in water that is 44°C and then dip them in cold water to prevent the heat from penetrating too far." The crates are then placed in cold storage at 5°C, awaiting transportation. The remaining rhizomes with the leaf pips go back into the earth, with Mathias replanting them 4cm apart against the 'dykes' thrown up by his trench-digger, then covering them with soil in a similar fashion to asparagus (to which *Convallaria majalis* is related). One year later, he will do it all over again: harvest, sort, sell and replant.

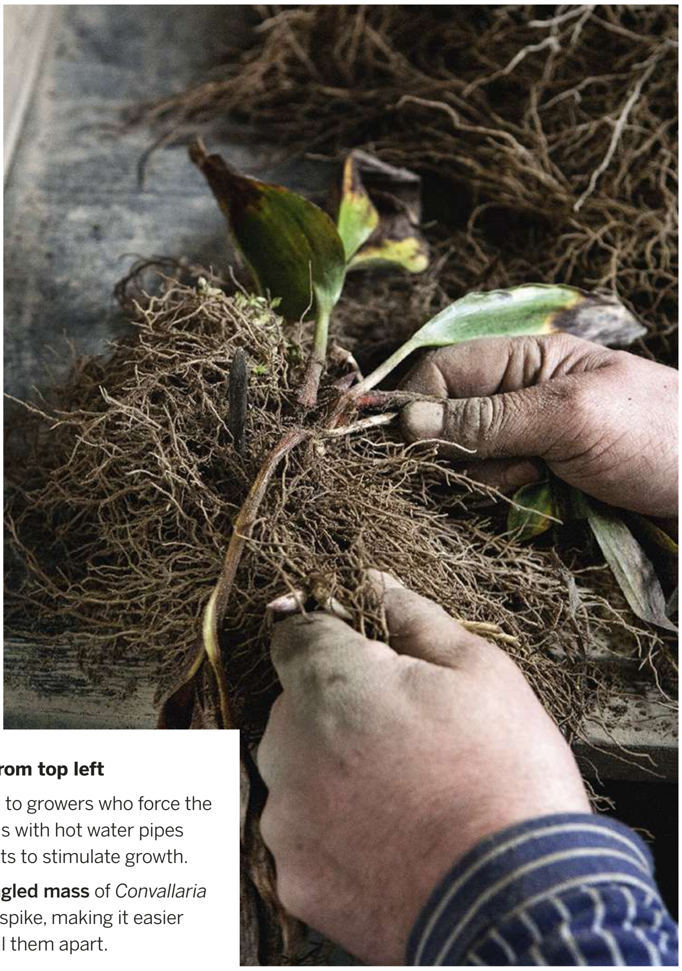
The company that buys Mathias's crop freezes the *Convallaria majalis* to -2.5°C and then thaws out portions as they are needed. They are then planted in wooden crates, and placed in a dark room at 20°C. Hot water pipes run underneath to stimulate growth. After a week, the crates are moved on to a table with hot water pipes above, teasing the plants upwards to seek out the warmth. Once tall enough, they will receive natural light, and in two days the yellowish leaves turn bright green and the sweet-smelling flowers come into bloom. They are then bundled up, roots and all, and shipped off to the flower auctions, just one step away from your vase or wedding bouquet. □

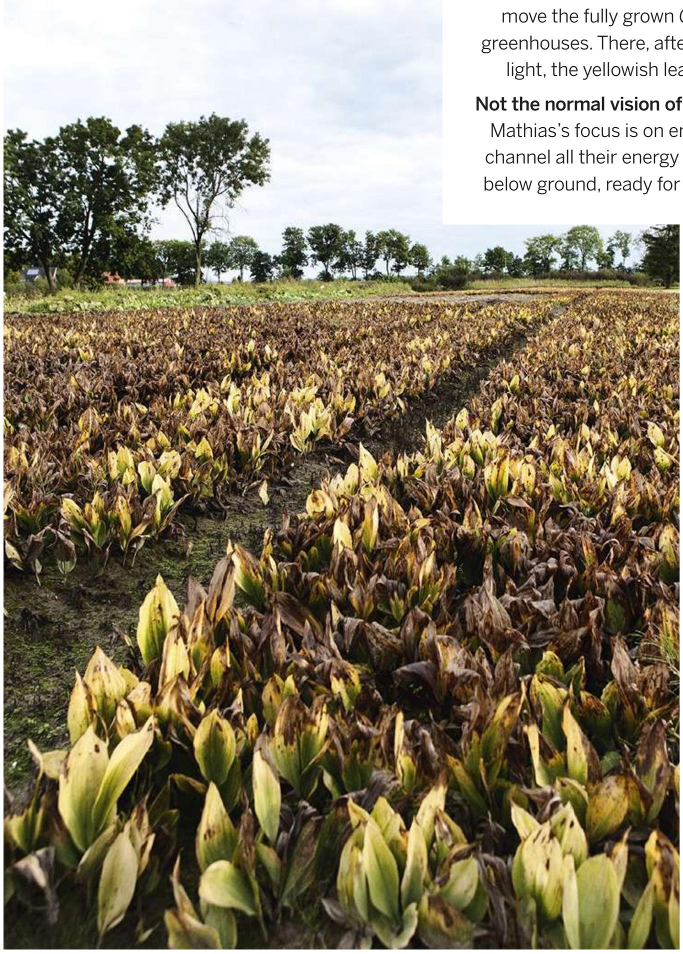
Grow your own

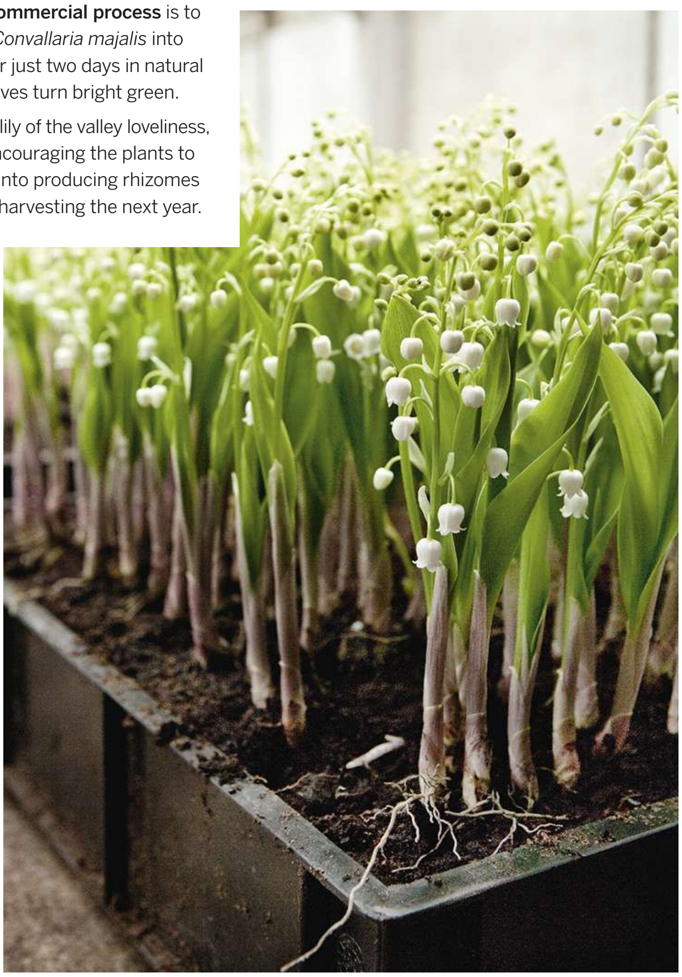
Expert grower Mathias explains the best way for gardeners to grow their own lily of the valley

- Be careful when handling *Convallaria majalis* because every part of the plant is poisonous, especially the berries, which may look attractive to children and pets.
- Before planting, soak the pips in tepid water. Plant rhizomes 7-10cm deep and 20cm apart, making sure the pips are covered.
- After planting, water generously. To promote spreading in the first year, pick any berries as soon as they appear – washing your hands afterwards – as this prevents the plant from putting its energy into creating seed. Divide and replant congested colonies in autumn, applying a generous mulch of composted leaf mould.
- *Convallaria majalis* is the perfect ground cover as it will spread, but you can keep it in check by burying a 25cm-high, thick plastic 'rim' around the preferred area. Or plant in large (10-15-litre) containers, buried in the ground. If you choose the latter option, dig them up every five years or so to thin them out.
- Despite its shade-loving reputation, *Convallaria majalis* also does well in full sun, but it is better suited to cold climates. It will bloom best after a hard cold winter, and although tolerant of poor soils, it prefers a rich, moist but well-drained soil. It tends not to bloom in very deep shade.









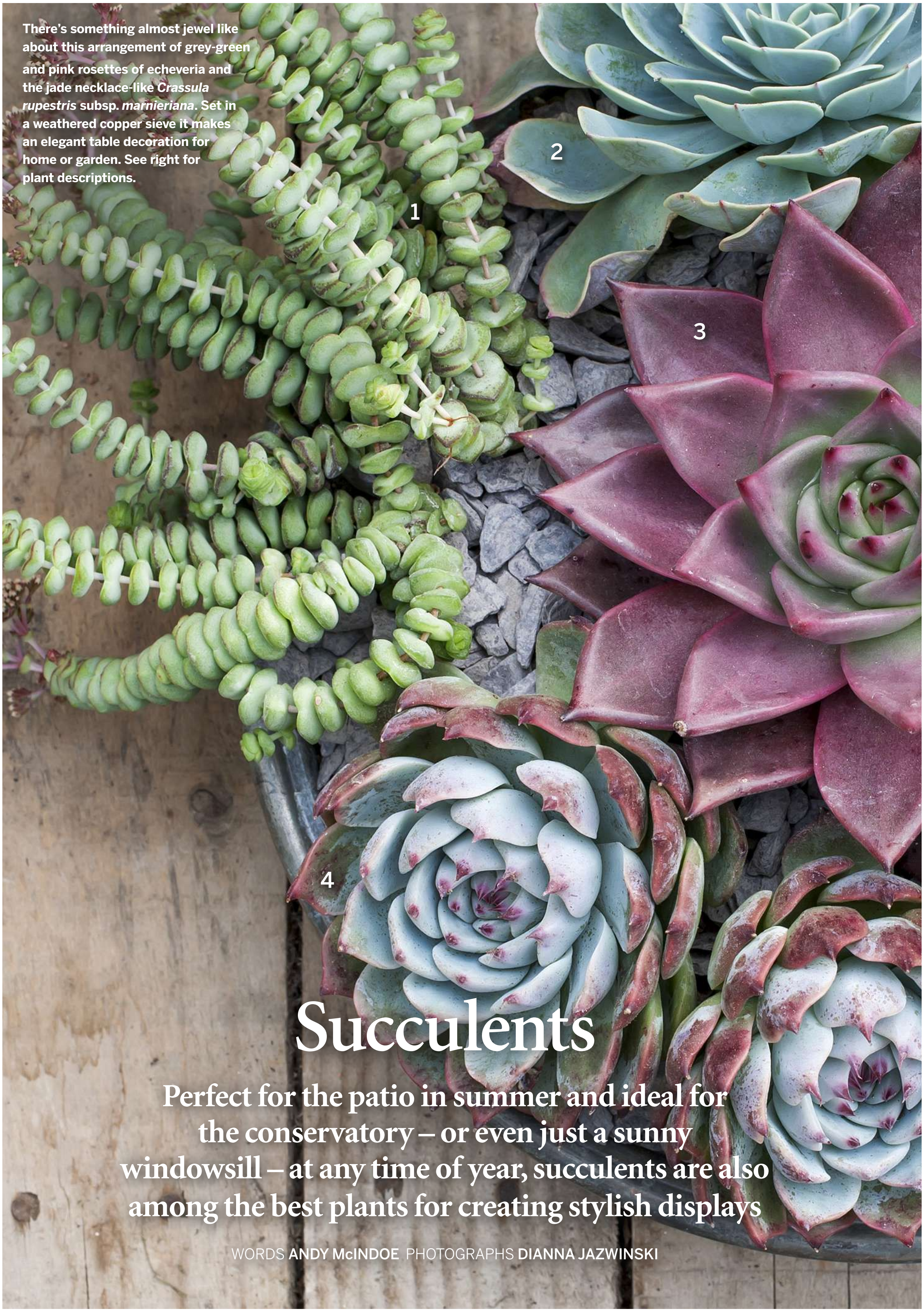
Clockwise from top left

Mathias's crop is sold on to growers who force the pips in darkened rooms with hot water pipes running under the plants to stimulate growth.

Mathias impales the tangled mass of *Convallaria majalis* rhizomes on a spike, making it easier for him to pull them apart.

The final stage in the commercial process is to move the fully grown *Convallaria majalis* into greenhouses. There, after just two days in natural light, the yellowish leaves turn bright green.

Not the normal vision of lily of the valley loveliness, Mathias's focus is on encouraging the plants to channel all their energy into producing rhizomes below ground, ready for harvesting the next year.



There's something almost jewel like about this arrangement of grey-green and pink rosettes of echeveria and the jade necklace-like *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana*. Set in a weathered copper sieve it makes an elegant table decoration for home or garden. See right for plant descriptions.

Succulents

Perfect for the patio in summer and ideal for the conservatory – or even just a sunny windowsill – at any time of year, succulents are also among the best plants for creating stylish displays

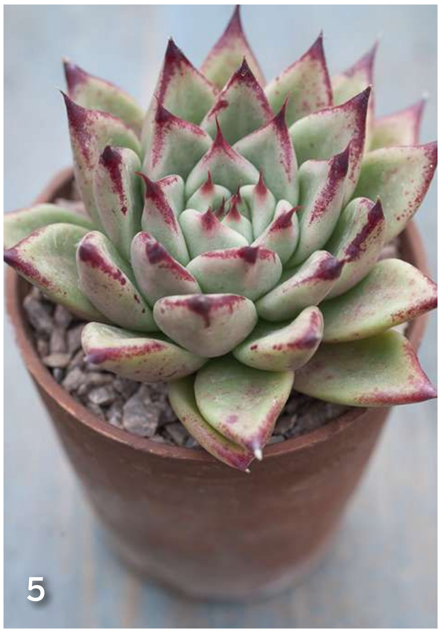
WORDS **ANDY McINDOE** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**

Sculptural, symmetrical, abstract, exquisite, absurd: how one might describe the wonderful plants known as succulents. Found throughout the world in places where water is scarce, these are plants to cherish that thrive on neglect. The most colourful and interesting hail from North and South America and Africa, relishing sun, despising wet, tolerating cold but perishing in frost.

Many of the succulents featured here are natives of South Africa and South America. They can withstand some cold, but require winter protection in all but the mildest areas, needing a period of dormancy when they won't grow.

Good drainage is the secret of success when it comes to succulents, and growing in pots and containers is the best way to control the drainage. It also makes it easier to move them into a conservatory, greenhouse or covered porch during the coldest months. Small pots with large ▷

1 *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana*
Red-tipped leaves are tightly stacked along the stem. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11†.
2 *Echeveria* 'Imbricata'
Wide, tight rosettes of flat, grey-green leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
3 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Taurus'
Striking pink rosettes. Will tolerate some shade. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
4 *Echeveria colorata*
Beautiful red-tipped rosettes. Pink flowers in summer. AGM*. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
5 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Ebony'
One of the most sought-after echeveria. From Mexico. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
6 *Aloe variegata*
Easy to grow as a houseplant. Flowers in summer. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
7 *Faucaria felina*
Pairs of chunky, curiously toothed, fleshy green leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
8 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Red Edge'
Grey-green leaves, edged in red form perfect rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
9 *Fenestraria rhopalophylla*
Known as baby toes, for obvious reasons. Daisy-like flowers in autumn. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
10 *Haworthia reinwardtii*
Dark-green leaves patterned with white warts. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.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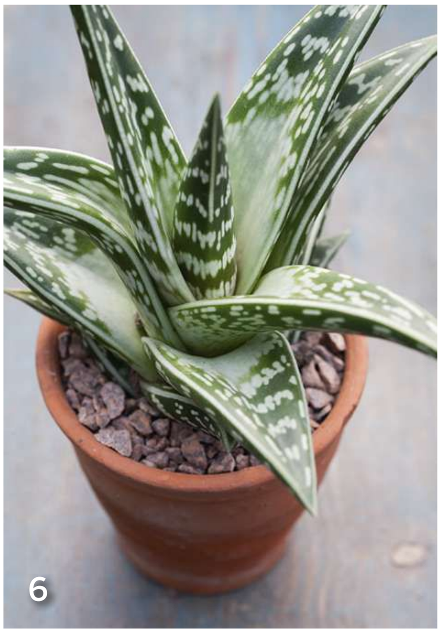
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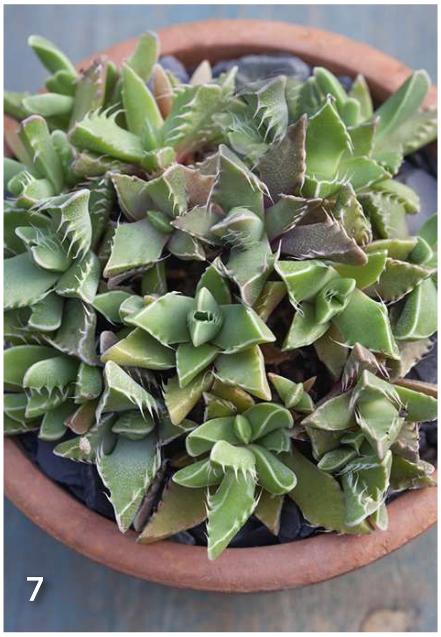
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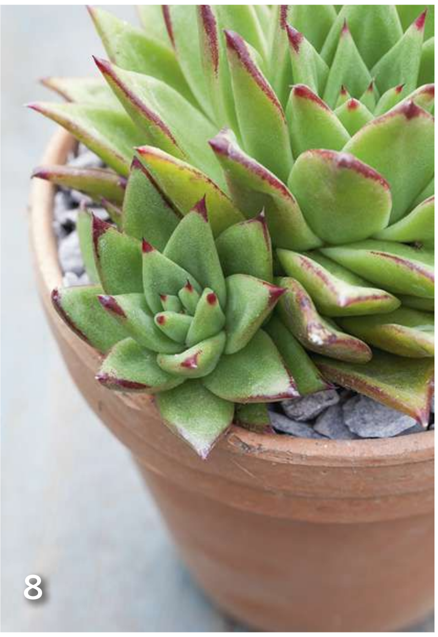
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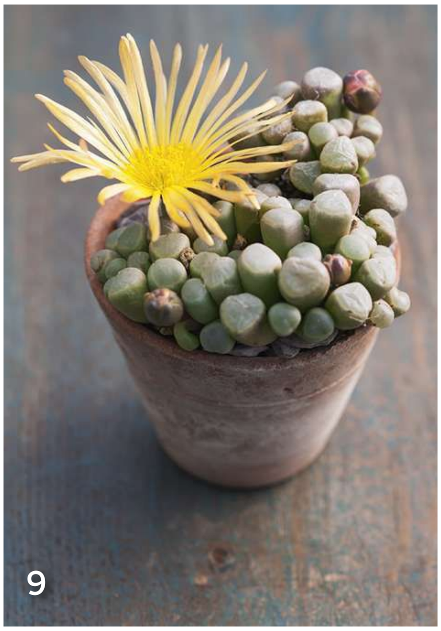
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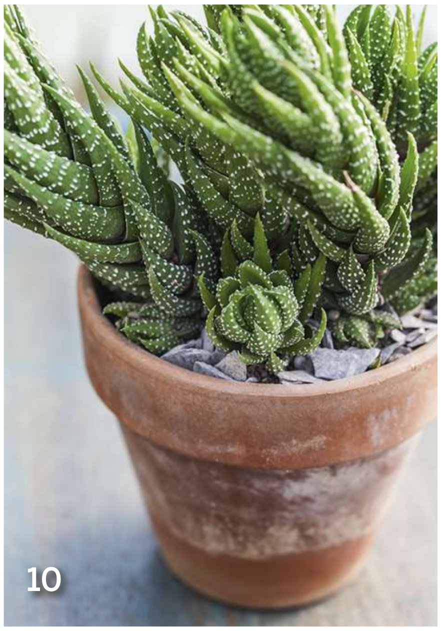
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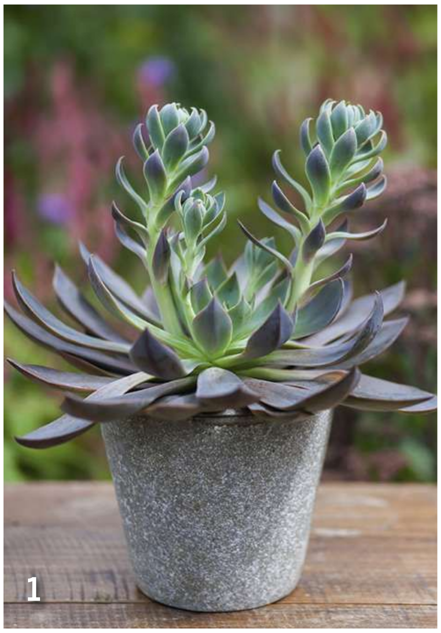
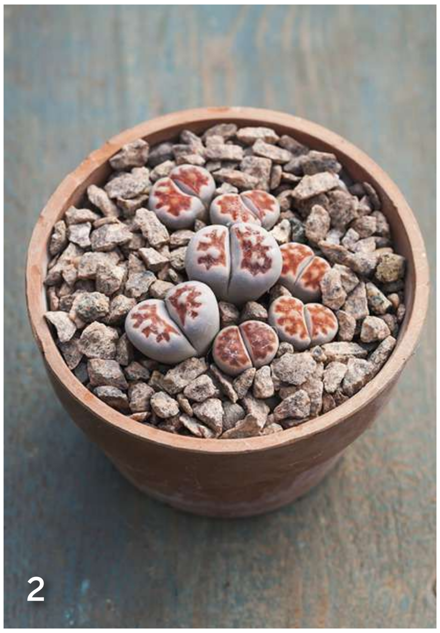
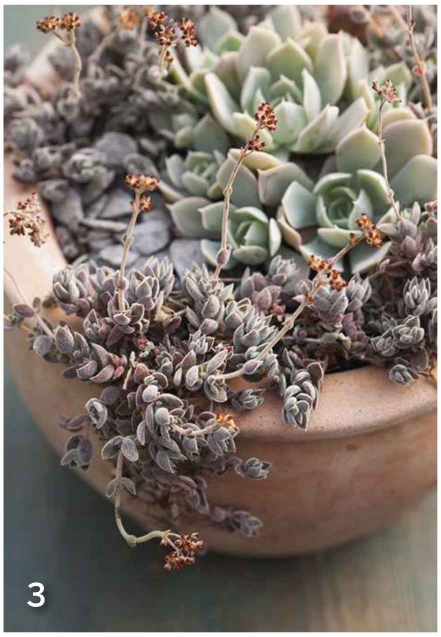
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

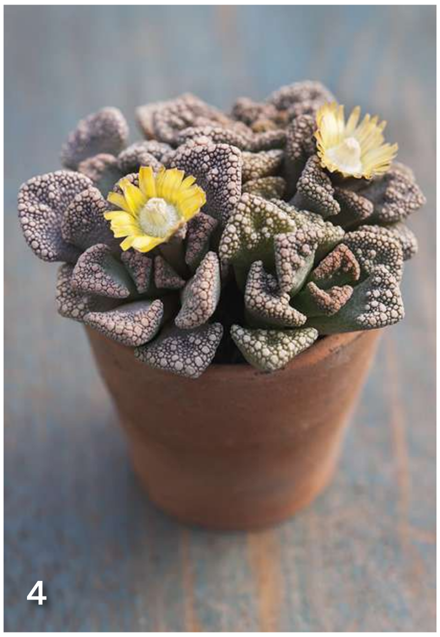


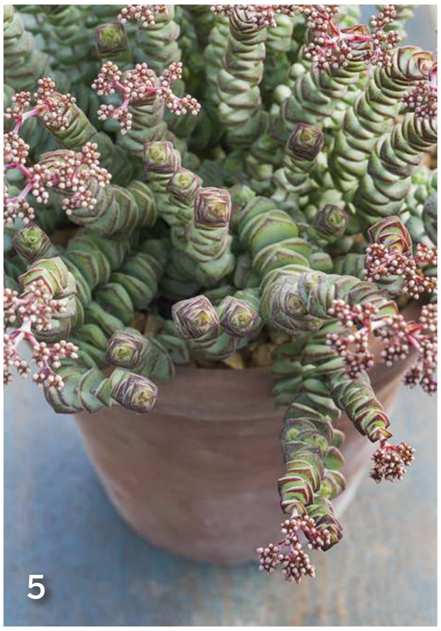


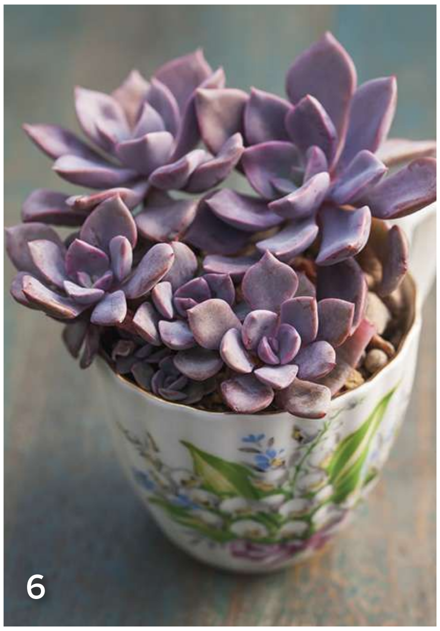
▷ drainage holes are ideal, as are shallow pans. If growing in large pots, partially fill these with hydroleca, using a growing medium only in the top third. Pot in a loam-based growing medium mixed with equal parts of sharp sand or horticultural grit. Water regularly but sparingly in the growing season; little when dormant.

Succulents lend themselves to creative, long-lasting arrangements that require low maintenance. Well-chosen containers that enhance the colour and appearance of the plants are essential to show them at their best. As they require shallow soil depth, many can be displayed on plates, or in containers without drainage holes ▷

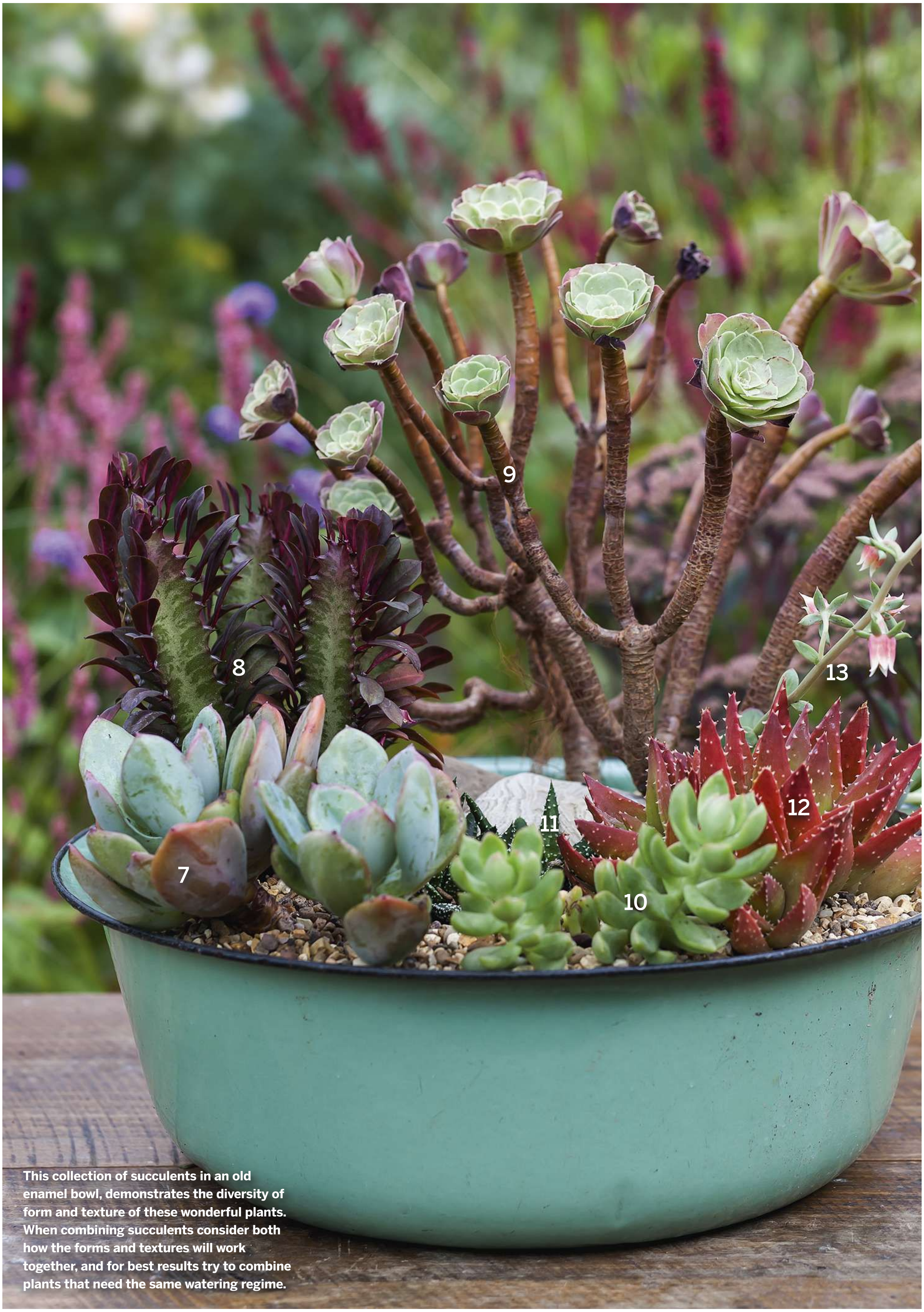




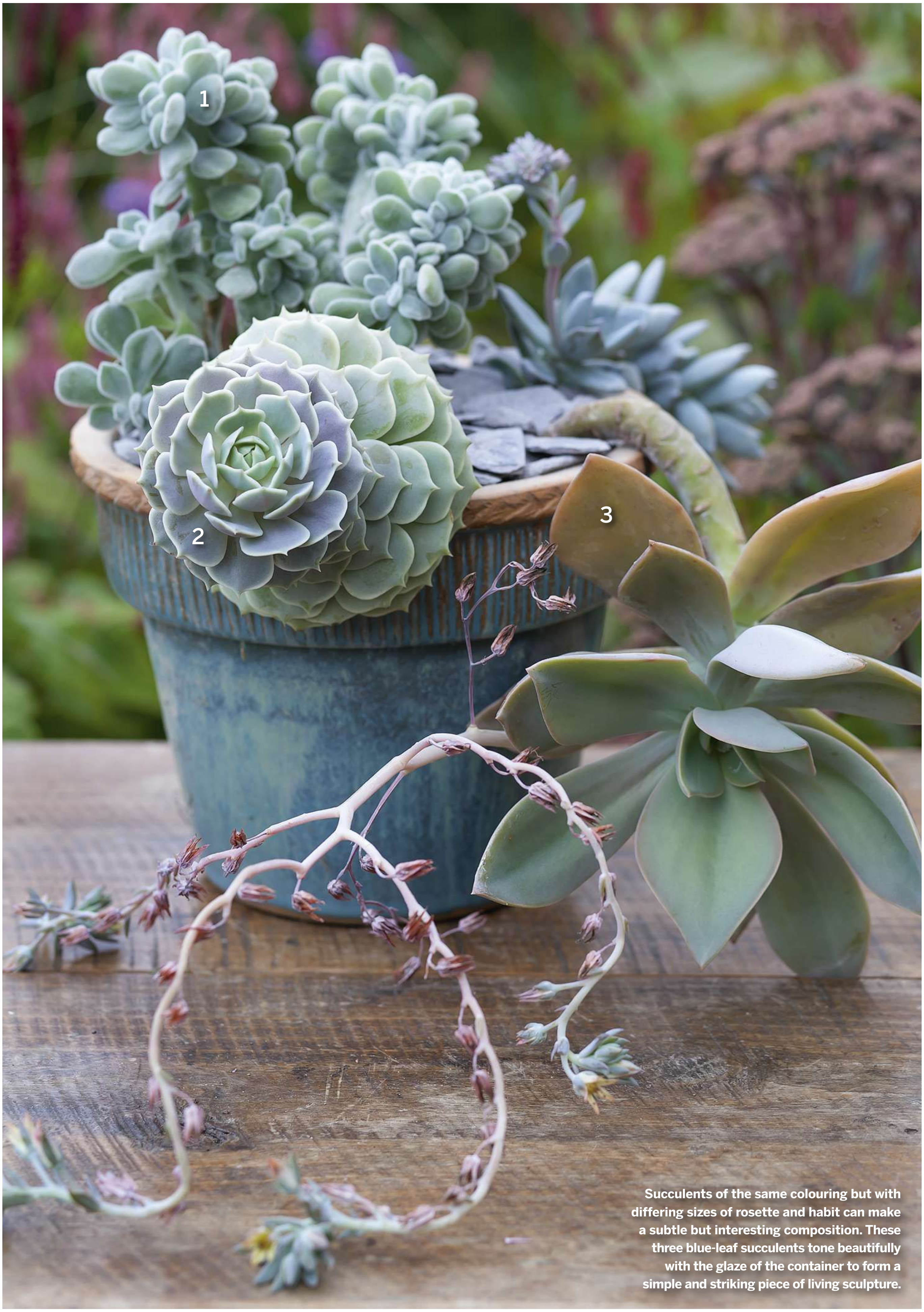




1 *Echeveria* 'Paris Palace' New cultivar with rosettes sea green towards centre; deep purple at edge. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
2 *Lithops karasmontana*
A living stone with clumps of buff-coloured leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
3 *Crassula lanuginosa*
A prostrate, mat-forming succulent, shown here with the rosette *Echeveria runyonii*. Hardier than many. RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.
4 *Titanopsis calcarea*
Yellow flowers appear in autumn and winter. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.
5 *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana*
See page 67.
6 x *Graptoveria* 'Debbie'
Purple-pink flowers appear in winter above pink leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
7 *Echeveria* 'Phyllis Collis' In full sun leaves change in colour from blue-grey to pink. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
8 *Euphorbia trigona* f. *rubra* Striking and easy to care for. USDA 9b-11.
9 *Aeonium arboreum*
Pink-edged green and rosettes on corky stems. RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.
10 *Sedum treleasei*
Thick and fleshy leaves that are a pale blue-green. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
11 *Haworthia pumila*
Pointed, dark-green leaves with white warts. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
12 *Aloe mitriformis*
Thick, short leaves ac quire reddish tint in dry conditions. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.
13 *Echeveria nodulosa* 'Painted Beauty'
Pretty pink flowers above striking striped rosettes. USDA 10a-11.



This collection of succulents in an old enamel bowl, demonstrates the diversity of form and texture of these wonderful plants. When combining succulents consider both how the forms and textures will work together, and for best results try to combine plants that need the same watering regime.



Succulents of the same colouring but with differing sizes of rosette and habit can make a subtle but interesting composition. These three blue-leaf succulents tone beautifully with the glaze of the container to form a simple and striking piece of living sculpture.

▷ providing plenty of stones, crocks or hydroleca are used, and watering is kept to a minimum. In more permanent containers covering the soil surface with fine slate, grit or stone chippings helps prevents wet soil from splashing on to the foliage.

Succulents appeal to collectors, plant lovers, flower arrangers and anyone with an eye for the unusual. Most are small in stature, so ideal to collect on a windowsill. Many succulents, especially echeverias, are widely available in garden centres, florists and houseplant retailers. A wider range of more interesting varieties can be found at plant fairs and specialist nurseries. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

- **The British Cactus and Succulent Society** has 80 branches around the UK for collectors and enthusiasts to meet and learn more about these amazing plants. Most branches have shows where you can see displays and buy plants. **Tel** 01708 447778. **Web** society.bcss.org.uk
- For where to buy see page 94.

1 ***Echeveria pulvinata* 'Frosty'**
All parts are densely covered with silvery white hairs. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

2 ***Echeveria* 'Lola'**
Striking looking pale lilac rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

3 x ***Graptoveria* 'Fred Ives'**
Hybrid of *Graptopetalum paraguayense* and *Echeveria gibbiflora*. USDA 9b-11.

4 ***Echeveria elegans***
Rosettes of whitish-green leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

5 x ***Pachyveria* 'Calypso'** Flower-like rosettes of copper-pink tipped, blue-grey leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

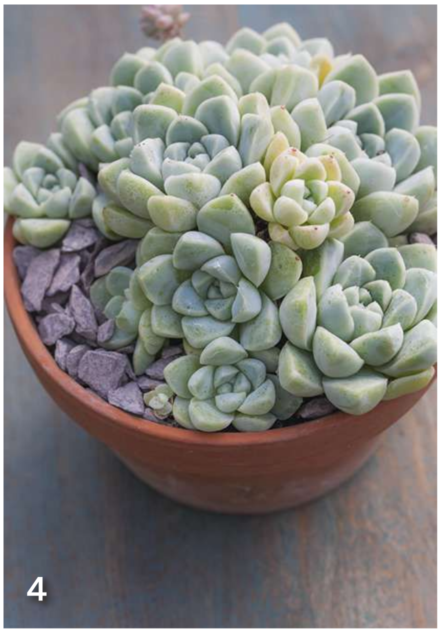
6 ***Adromischus cooperi***
Dwarf succulent with tubular silver-green leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

7 ***Echeveria prolifica***
Tender succulent forming clusters of silver green rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

8 ***Euphorbia obesa*** Ball-shaped succulent exquisitely segmented and ribbed. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

9 ***Sedum morganianum***
Its trailing stems give it the name burro's tail. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10b-11.

MANY THANKS TO FIONA WEMYSS OF BLUE LEAF PLANTS FOR HER HELP WITH THIS FEATURE.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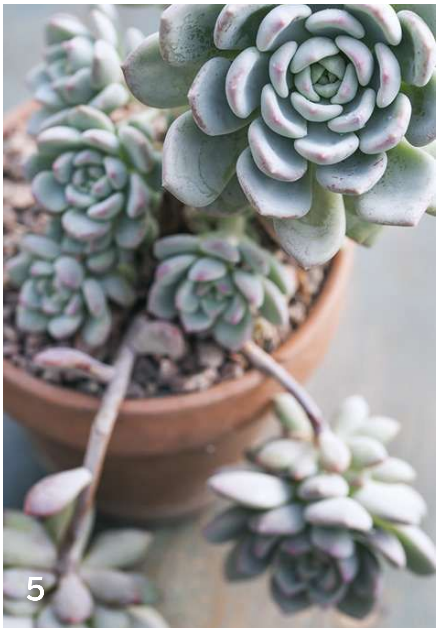
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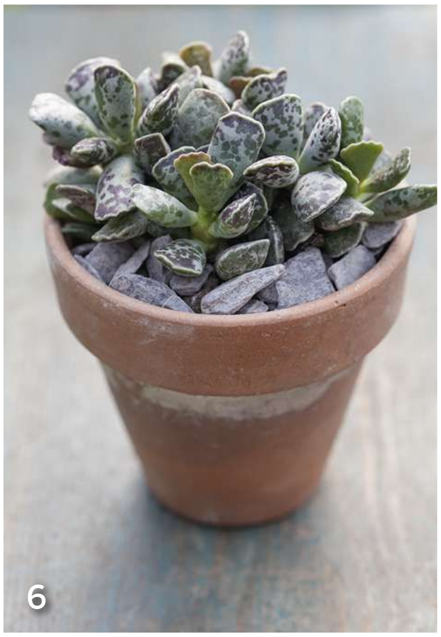
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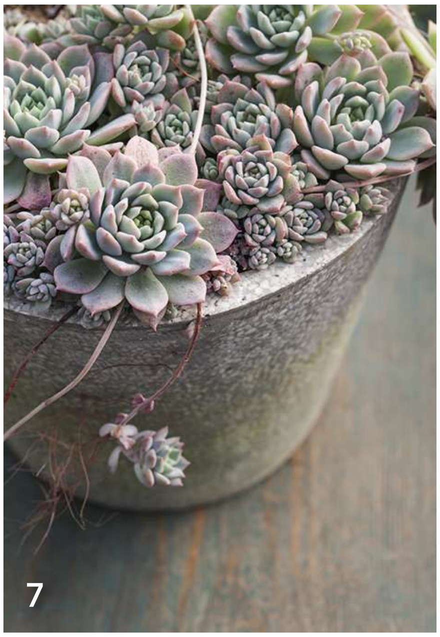
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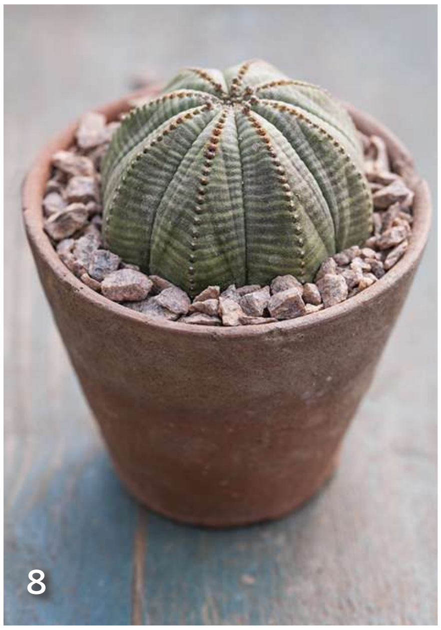
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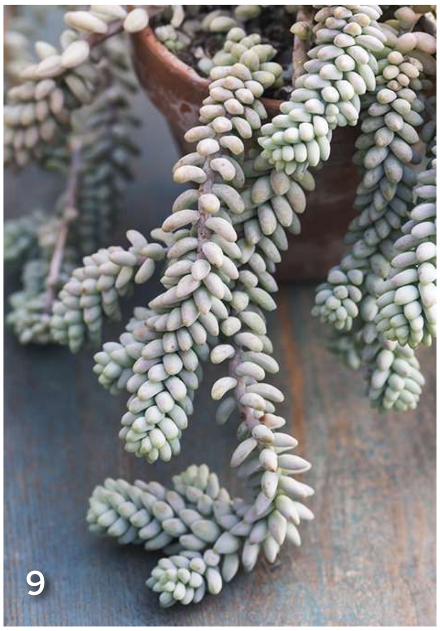
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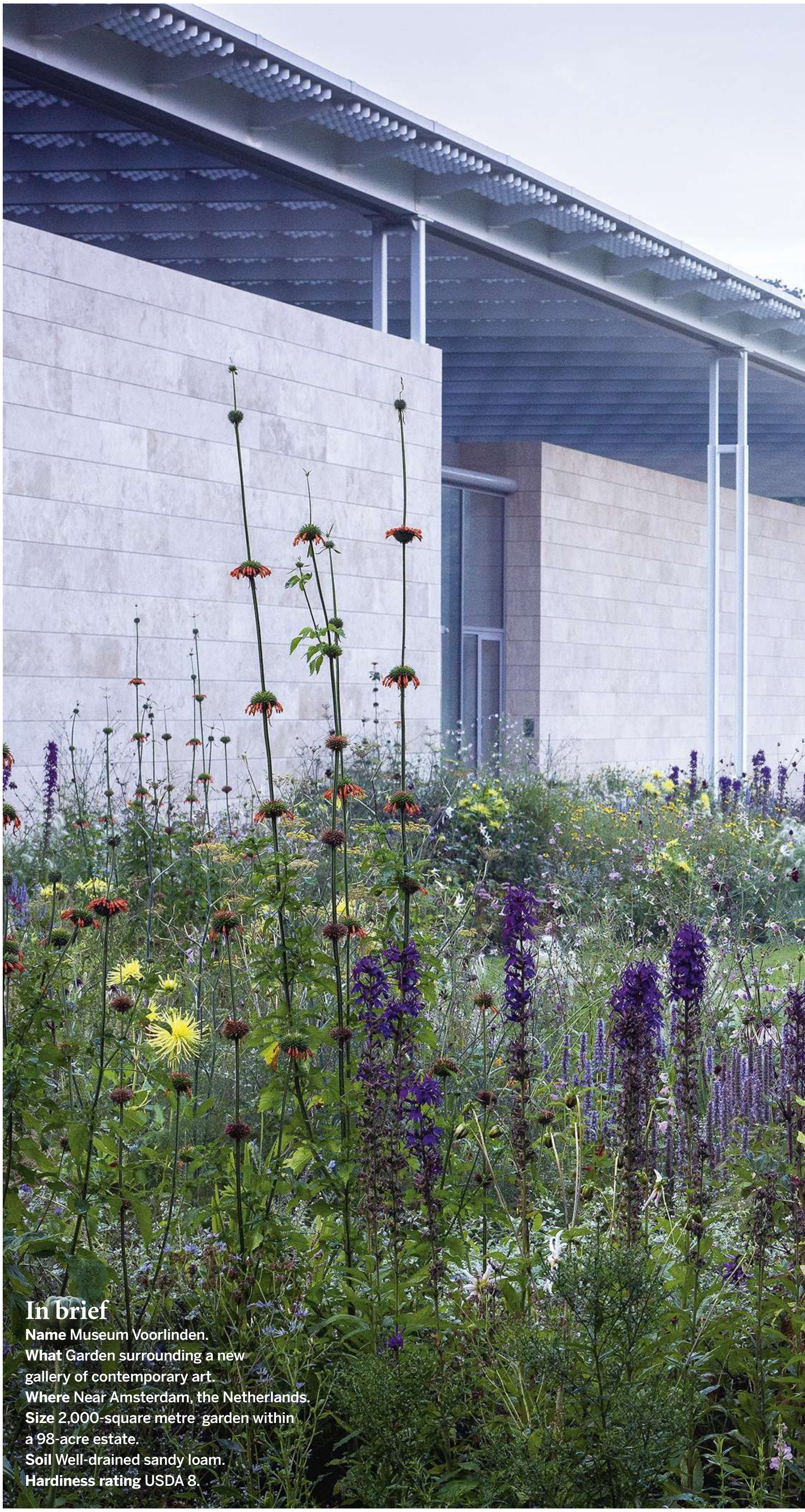
Talking about his recent design project, Piet Oudolf sounds like an excited child. “This was such fun,” he says. “I really loved doing it. It has been a real pleasure.” The project he is enthusing about is the planting around a new gallery for contemporary art in the Netherlands, Museum Voorlinden, which has been built to exhibit the private collection – amassed over the past 50 years – of Dutch businessman Joop van Caldenborgh.

The gallery sits in a 98-acre estate of sand dunes, meadows and woodlands on the Netherland’s west coast, where the light is crisp and clear. The sleek, low building of stone and glass with a white steel colonnade has the footprint of a football pitch and the proportions of a Greek temple. Its rectilinear presence is in contrast to Piet’s voluptuous planting, which echoes the tree-line of the surrounding woodlands. The garden seems to stream out of the woods towards the gallery, with the planting flowing around mounded islands of mown grass, an impression that is even greater from within. In one room a larger-than-life hyperrealistic sculpture presents a bathing couple, complete with beach umbrella, relaxing in front of the waves of Piet’s airy planting.

Piet Oudolf is best known for designing schemes of perennial plants and grasses that focus on the way that plants relate to each other throughout the year. The hallmark of his schemes is sustainability and durability. The garden at Voorlinden needed to look spectacular for the opening of the museum and for this Piet had to adopt a different approach. “We had just a few months between being able to plant and the inauguration of the museum. I decided that we needed to introduce ▷



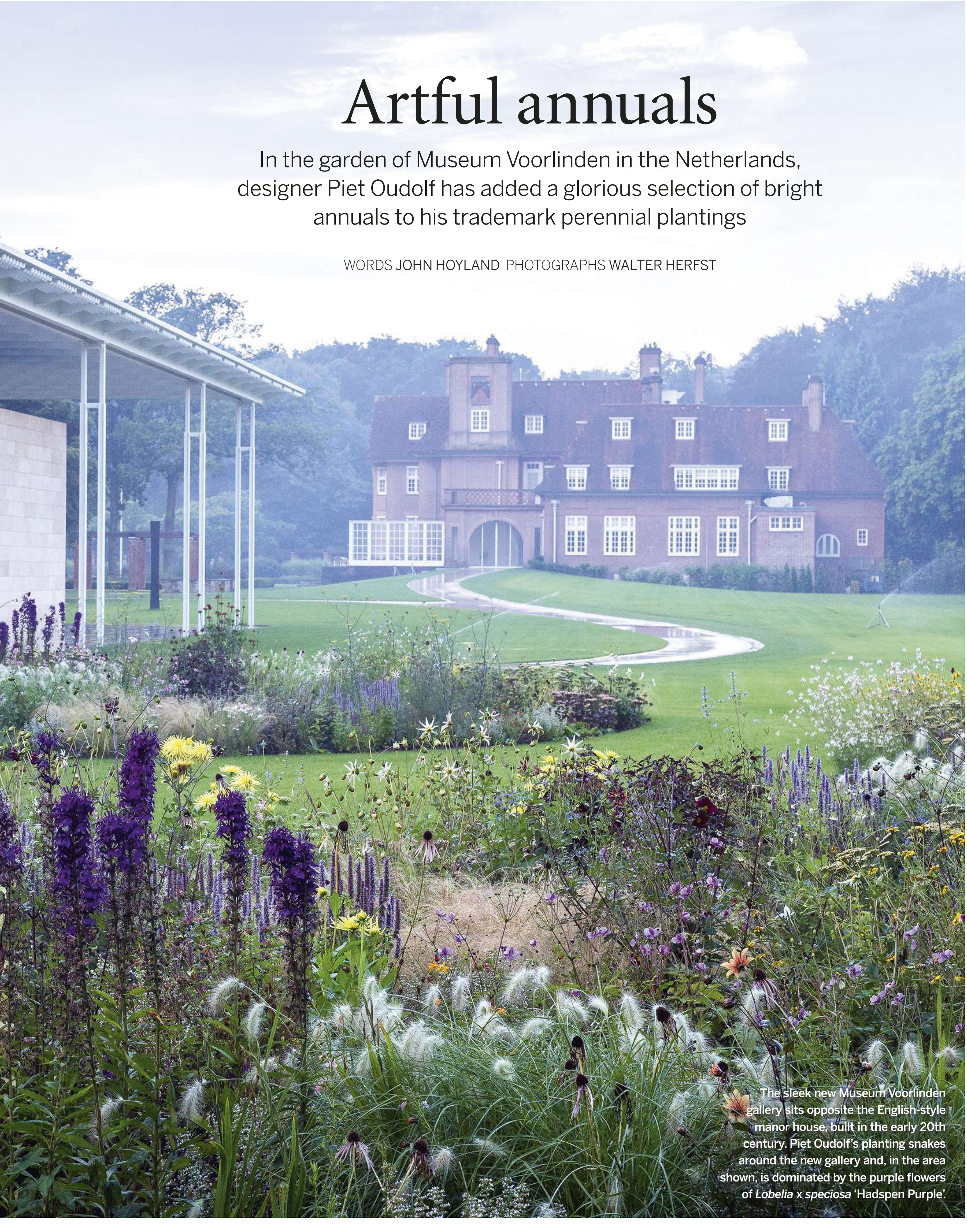
In brief

Name Museum Voorlinden.
What Garden surrounding a new gallery of contemporary art.
Where Near Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
Size 2,000-square metre garden within a 98-acre estate.
Soil Well-drained sandy loam.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

Artful annuals

In the garden of Museum Voorlinden in the Netherlands, designer Piet Oudolf has added a glorious selection of bright annuals to his trademark perennial plantings

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **WALTER HERFST**

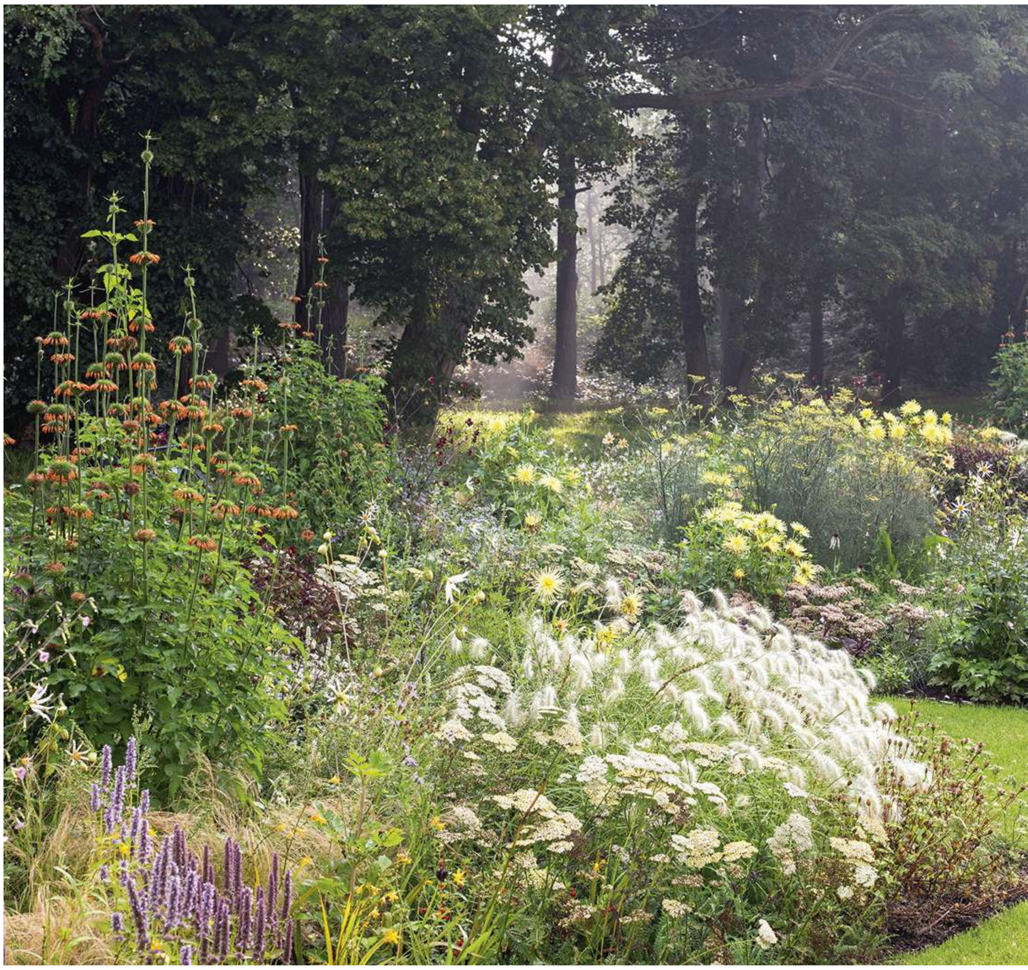


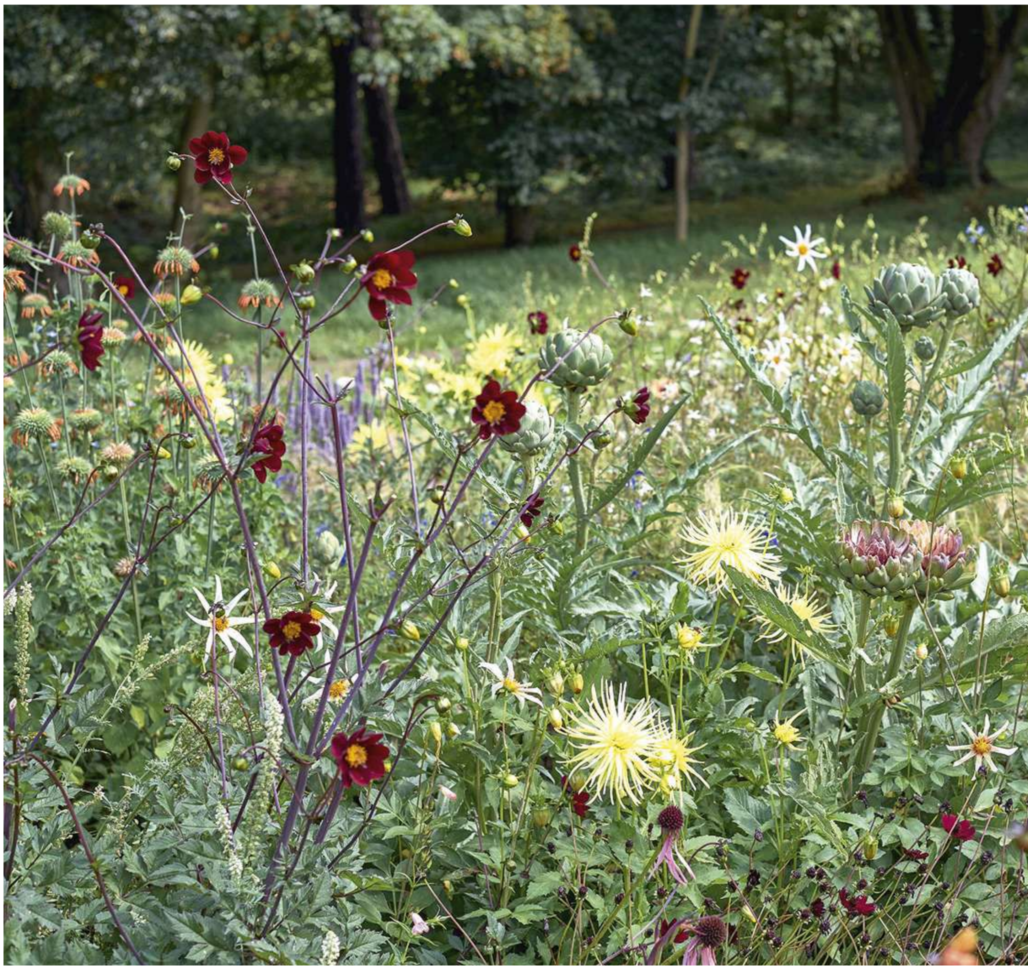
The sleek new Museum Voorlinden gallery sits opposite the English-style manor house, built in the early 20th century. Piet Oudolf's planting snakes around the new gallery and, in the area shown, is dominated by the purple flowers of *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Hadspen Purple'.

▷ annual and tender plants into the design to ensure that the garden was looking as good as possible for the gallery opening." The result is spectacular and exuberant, with the ephemeral plants adding a lightness and effervescence to the garden that sparkled even into late October.

Among the achilleas, sedums and echinaceas that are the backbone of many of Piet's gardens, rise spires of *Leonotis leonorus* and the bronze-leaved fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Giant Bronze'. The delicacy and airiness of plants such as *Nicotiana mutabilis* and *Gaura lindheimeri* is punctured by the sharp leaves and enormous flowers of artichokes, *Cynara cardunculus* Scolymus Group. It makes me smile to see such an improbable plant here and I notice that other visitors are as amused as I am. The planting is abundant and dense and colourful. Orange drifts of the tall marigolds, *Tagetes patula*, vie for attention with the intense purple flowers of *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Hadspen Purple'.

As well as annual plants, Piet has also used many tender plants. The ephemeral nature of the Voorlinden garden has presented him with the rare opportunity to use examples that more typically cannot survive a European winter and are outside his usual range. The most ebullient and high-spirited of which are the dahlias that are threaded throughout the garden. Flamboyant bright-yellow flowers of *Dahlia* 'Gryson's Yellow Spider' seem to jump up everywhere. It's also surprising to see *Helichrysum petiolare* 'Silver', a plant usually seen trailing from hanging baskets. Here it is planted in groups to form luxurious mounds of velvety silver foliage that last until the first frosts. The chocolate cosmos, ▷





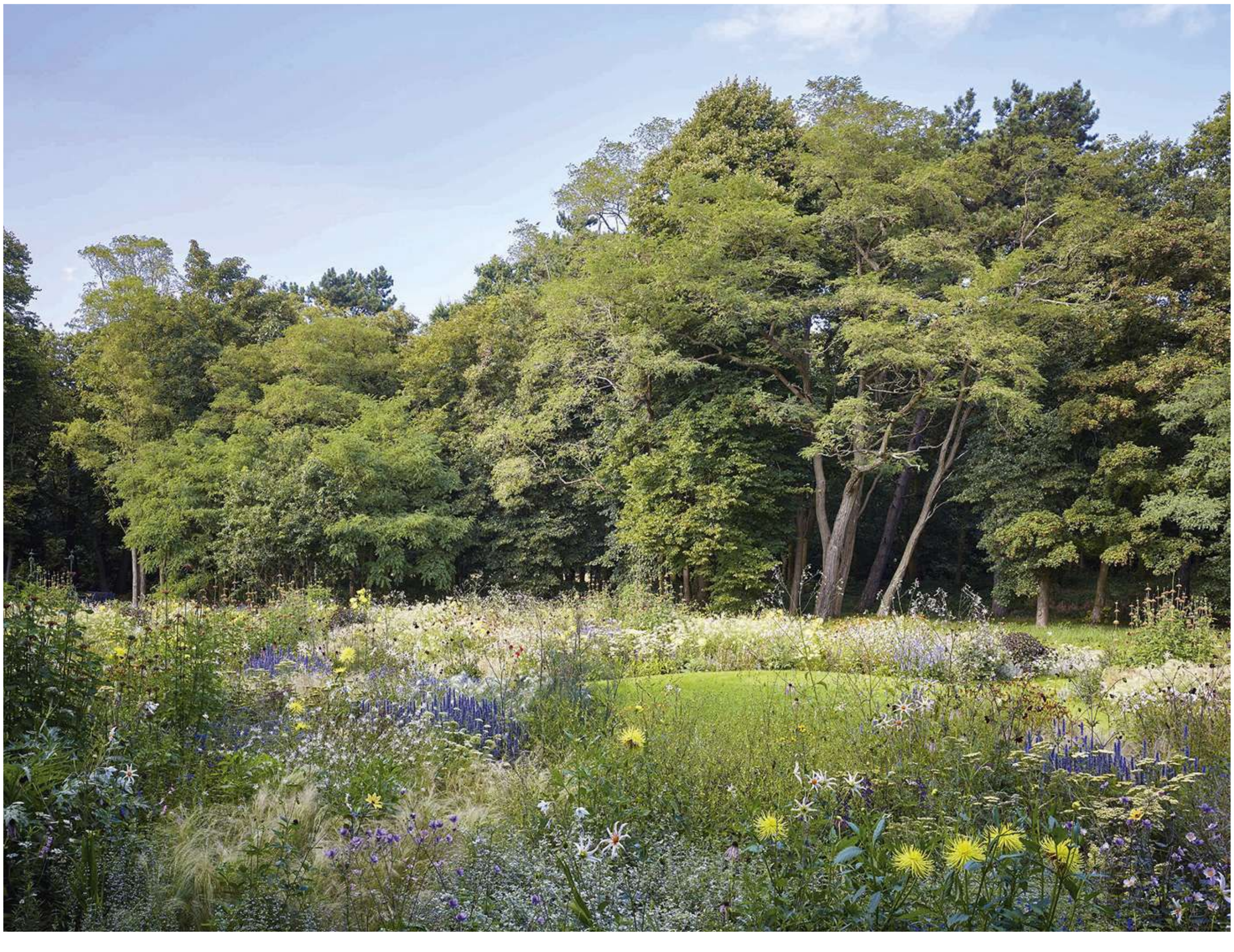
Clockwise from top left

The surrounding trees provide a sombre backdrop to the bright plants. In the foreground *Pennisetum villosum* foams next to the creamy flowers of *Achillea filipendulina* 'Hymne'. On the left, *Leonotis nepetifolia* towers above the other flowers.

Several of the spaces within the new gallery look directly out over the garden.

From within the gallery, visitors see the adjacent woodland across the garden.

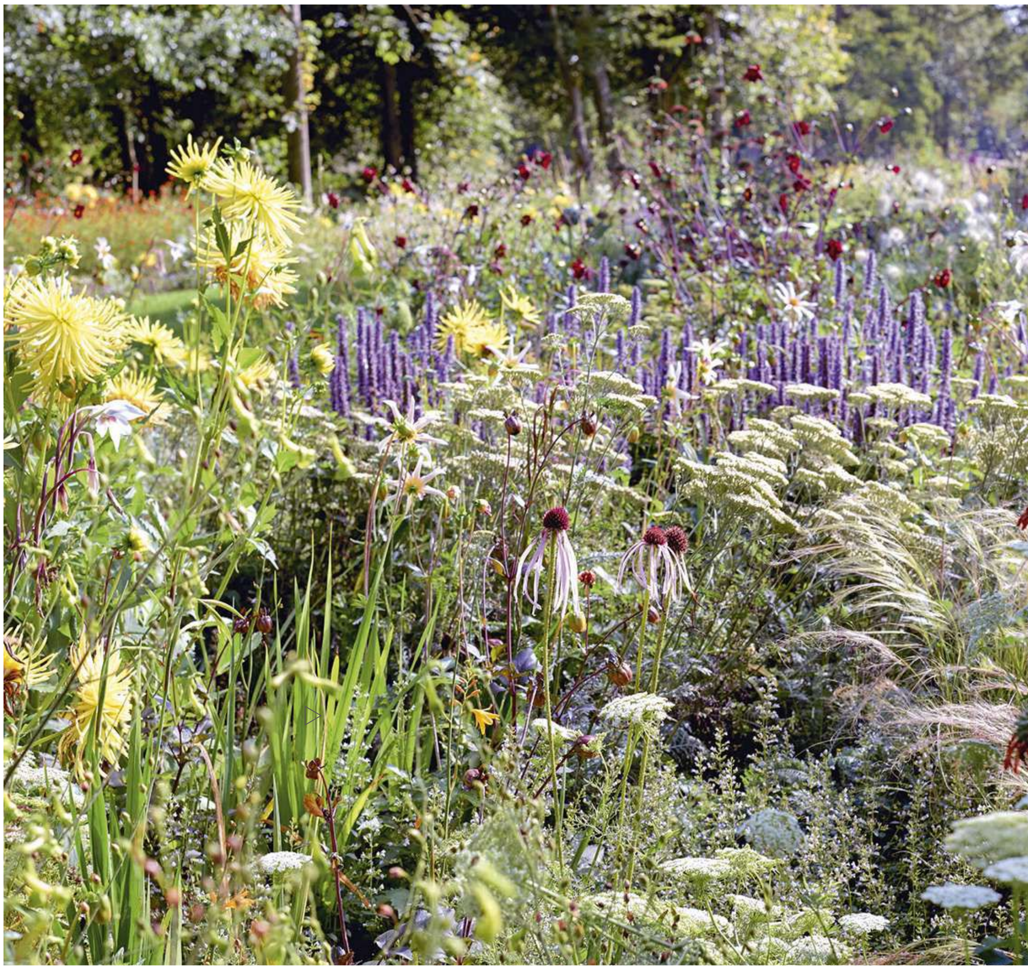
Piet has used dahlias extensively in the garden. Here, the small, dark flowers of *Dahlia* 'Mexican Black' and the showy flowers of *Dahlia* 'Gryson's Yellow Spider' grow next to an artichoke.

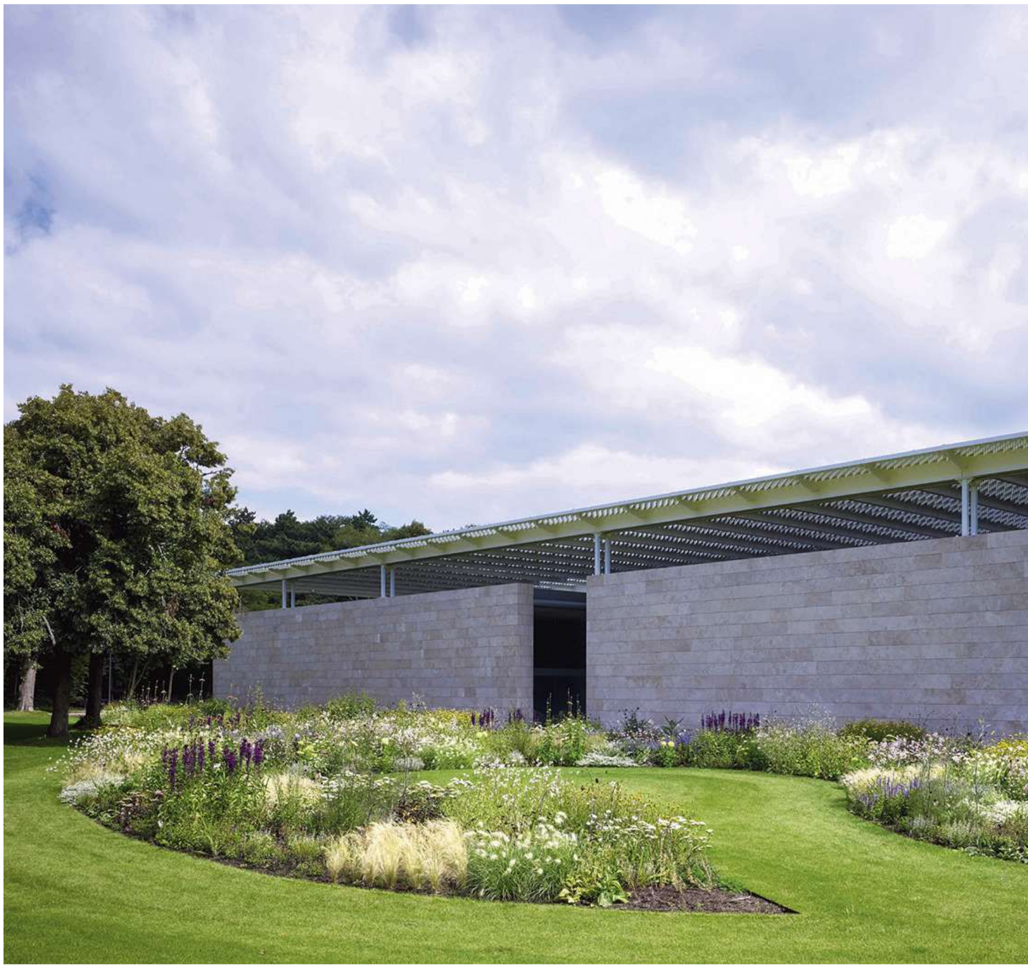


▷ *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, is covered with flowers at the end of the season, bringing the delight of its chocolatey scent to the party. Also performing well, right until the end of the season, are the pale-blue flowers of *Salvia uliginosa* and the darker blue flowers of its shorter cousin *Salvia patens*.

This planting scheme was intended to be a temporary one and during this winter Piet will redesign and replant the garden to be long-lived and resilient, using a characteristic palette of perennial plants and plant communities. The project has attracted him to the idea of working with annual plants but the cost each year of redesigning and replanting such a garden would be prohibitive. "I am very happy with the result of this project," he says, "and with the experience of combining annual plants into the planting scheme. Yes, I am very happy. The result has exceeded my expectations."

Many visitors to the Voorlinden also seem happy with the garden, making a bee-line, before they visit the gallery, to the extravagant vision that Piet has created. There seems to be something about annual plants that pleases everyone. "Of course," Piet explains. "They are colourful, joyful, alive and they create a spectacle that appeals to the child in all of us." □





USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Museum Voorlinden, Buurtweg 90,
2244 AG Wassenaar, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)70 512 1660
Website voorlinden.nl
Open Daily 11am-5pm.

- Find Piet's complete planting list for Museum Voorlinden at **gardensillustrated.com**

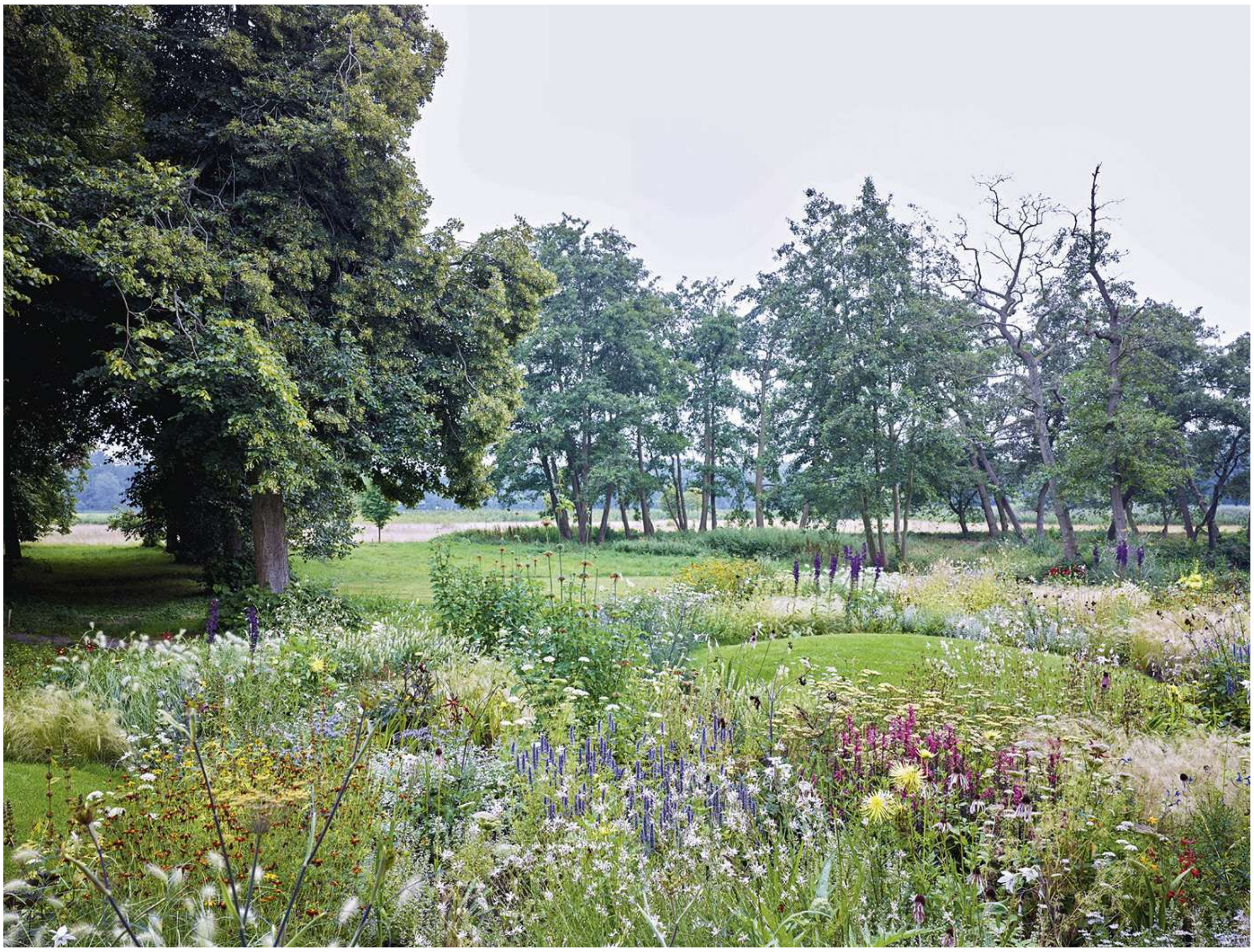
Clockwise from top left

Perennials and annuals mix happily with the spikes of *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune', softened by the rounded flower heads of *Ammi majus*. In the centre are bronze cones of *Echinacea pallida* 'Hula Dancer'.

The dense matrix of plants close to the gallery evokes a meadow.

Seen from the gallery, the gardens appear to emerge from the surrounding woodlands and meadows.

The billowing plants and circular grass mounds create a satisfying counterpoint to the rectilinear building.



A new leaf

On a plot near Bristol, social enterprise the Severn Project offers staff a new start in life through growing salad

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Severn Project founder Steve Glover, centre, shows off the latest crop of salad leaves with, from left, staff members Pip, Alice, Marcel and Sammy.

Severn Project CIC
this is what an urban farmer looks like

Steve Glover is standing in a field of pristine and vibrant salad leaves, just outside Bristol, contemplating his decidedly patchy history with soil. “On our first site the soil was full of stones. On the second there was no soil and we had to import 1,000 tonnes. Here we have a claggy clay soil that has been overgrazed by horses and we pile on mushroom compost to compensate.” He has just taken on a fourth site, and says, “I have finally learned my lesson! The soil there is beautiful.” The tale is indicative of the fact that, despite running a successful horticultural business, which supplies perfect and varied salad leaves to around 140 companies a week, Steve had no experience in horticulture when he started out. The salad – though grown to perfection – was always a means to an end.

Steve’s real interest is in rehabilitation. “I had problems with drink and drugs myself. I managed to pull out of it, and studied drug rehabilitation at university.” He felt that meaningful work was the single thing that made the most difference to ex-drug users’ futures. “We are all defined by our roles: teacher; doctor; responsible parent. But junkie, alcoholic, family scapegoat; these are all roles that define people too. You live with that role and even defend it and build it around you. And when you have taken a 20-year holiday from responsibility, and don’t even understand how the world works any more, it is easier to stick with that role than to change.” Steve’s plan was to provide jobs for people who could not find work through traditional channels: ex-drug users; ex-convicts; people with mental health difficulties; and anyone with a gap in their CV that would trouble most employers. He is paid no money for doing it, and has no charity status: he just believes that businesses should have a social role in society. The whole endeavour rests on the success of the leaves.

The staff agree that the Severn Project presents them with an alternative vision of themselves. One, an ex-heroin addict who asked to remain anonymous, says: “I am in the middle of a 12-step recovery process, and that’s really important, but it’s not my whole life. I can’t just sit in a council flat not taking drugs. This feels natural and important. It’s worth getting out of bed for.” Sammy, another member of staff, had difficulty finding work after a short spell in prison for possession of cannabis. “It felt unfair as I had done my time, but I was still being punished. People liked me and wanted to employ me, but couldn’t after CRB checks. But here I got a chance and I feel so lucky to do what I do. It feels very real, very traditional. You are working with the environment, harvesting plants while the bees are right next to you harvesting them too.”

Growing food, Steve believes, has been central to the project’s success. “Through human history and evolution we have become specialist at several things: creating shelter; controlling fire; taming horses; and manipulating nature to provide us with food. A business based on any one of these things could create a naturally therapeutic environment.” The physicality of the work is also key. “This is about breaking down the barriers between a person and their perceived world, and out on the field that happens in a very straightforward way. You can’t work here for long without wanting to know if it’s going to be frosty tomorrow. You have to take an interest in the world, and in your place within it.” □

• **Find out more at thesevernproject.org**

SEVERN
Mixed Leaf

Growing salad leaves the Severn Project way

The Severn Project mostly grows different types of mustard – Steve particularly likes ‘Red Frills’, ‘Red Lace’ and mizuna – but also parsley, coriander and baby kale, sowing thickly using 300g of seed across a 50m bed. There are beds of edible flowers and stevia too. In order to grow the highest possible quality leaves, the project employs the ‘stale seed bed’ method. “We cultivate a strip of soil, but rather than sowing into it straight away we cultivate it again and again, once a day, for two weeks,” says Steve. This may sound like making work, and to an extent it is – Steve deliberately chose a quick-turnover, high-maintenance crop to keep members of staff engaged – but it also makes commercial sense. “It means that when we sow we are starting at zero: no weeds, no slugs. We harvest the leaves after three weeks; slug eggs take four weeks to hatch, so they are not an issue,” says Steve.

• **Turn the page for 12 favourite crops.** ▷

2

1 A few stray 'Green Frills' contrast prettily with the 'Red Lace' in this bed of mustard, which is the project's most common crop.

2 The parsley is given a close cropping.

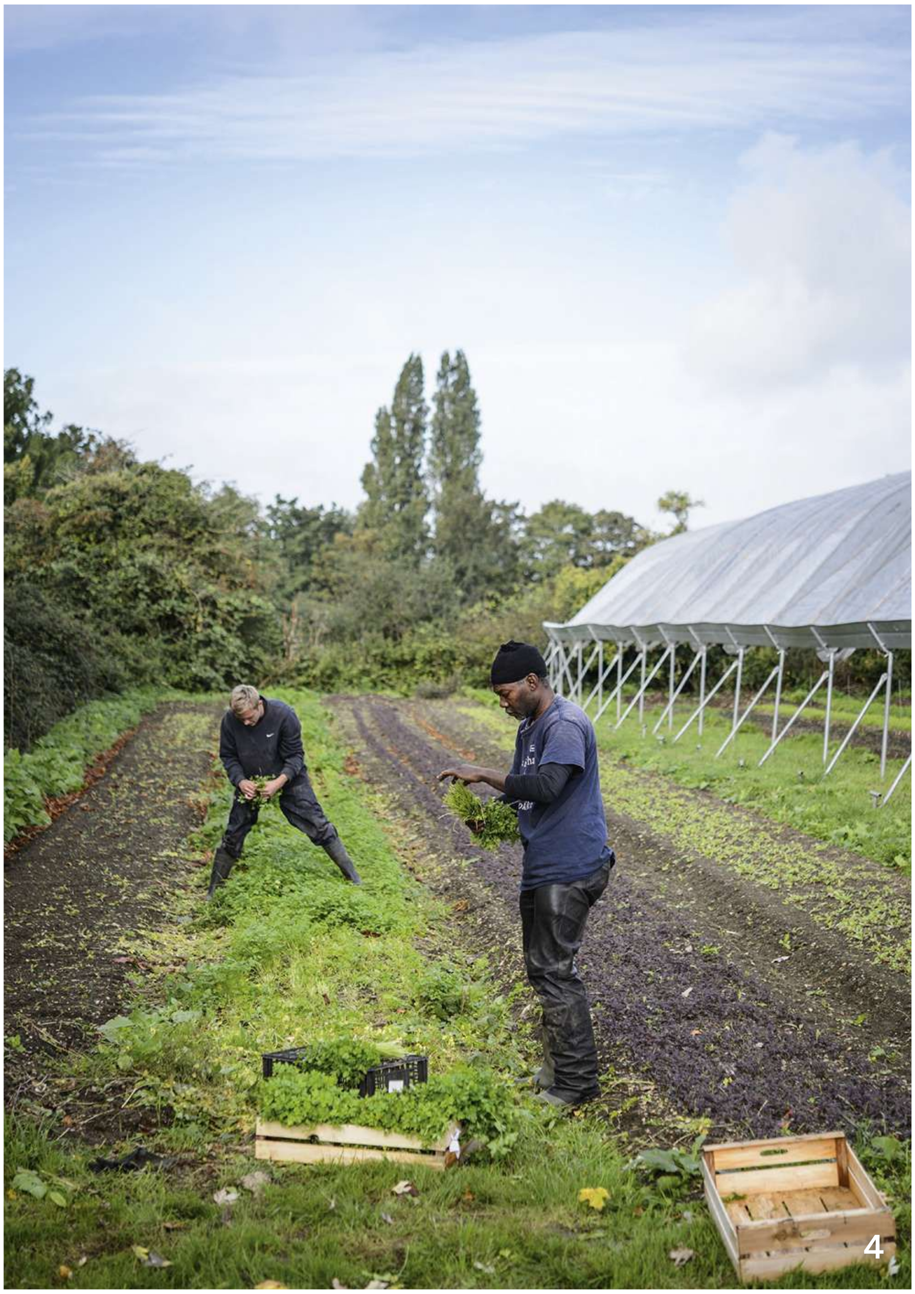
3 Steve is joined by Marcel and Sammy to harvest mizuna under a polytunnel at the Whitchurch site, south of Bristol, leased to the project by Bristol City Council.

4 Crops are grown in wide rows, which can also be harvested by tractor. The project grows, harvests, packs and distributes 750kg of salad each week, which is watered using rainwater captured by the tunnels.

5 Carefully picked nasturtium flowers add bright edible pops of colour.

6 Delicate borage flowers add variety and interest to the salad leaves.

7 Alice holds a harvested box of salad leaves ready for packing and distribution, including 'Green Frills' and 'Red Frills', red chard, mizuna and bull's blood.



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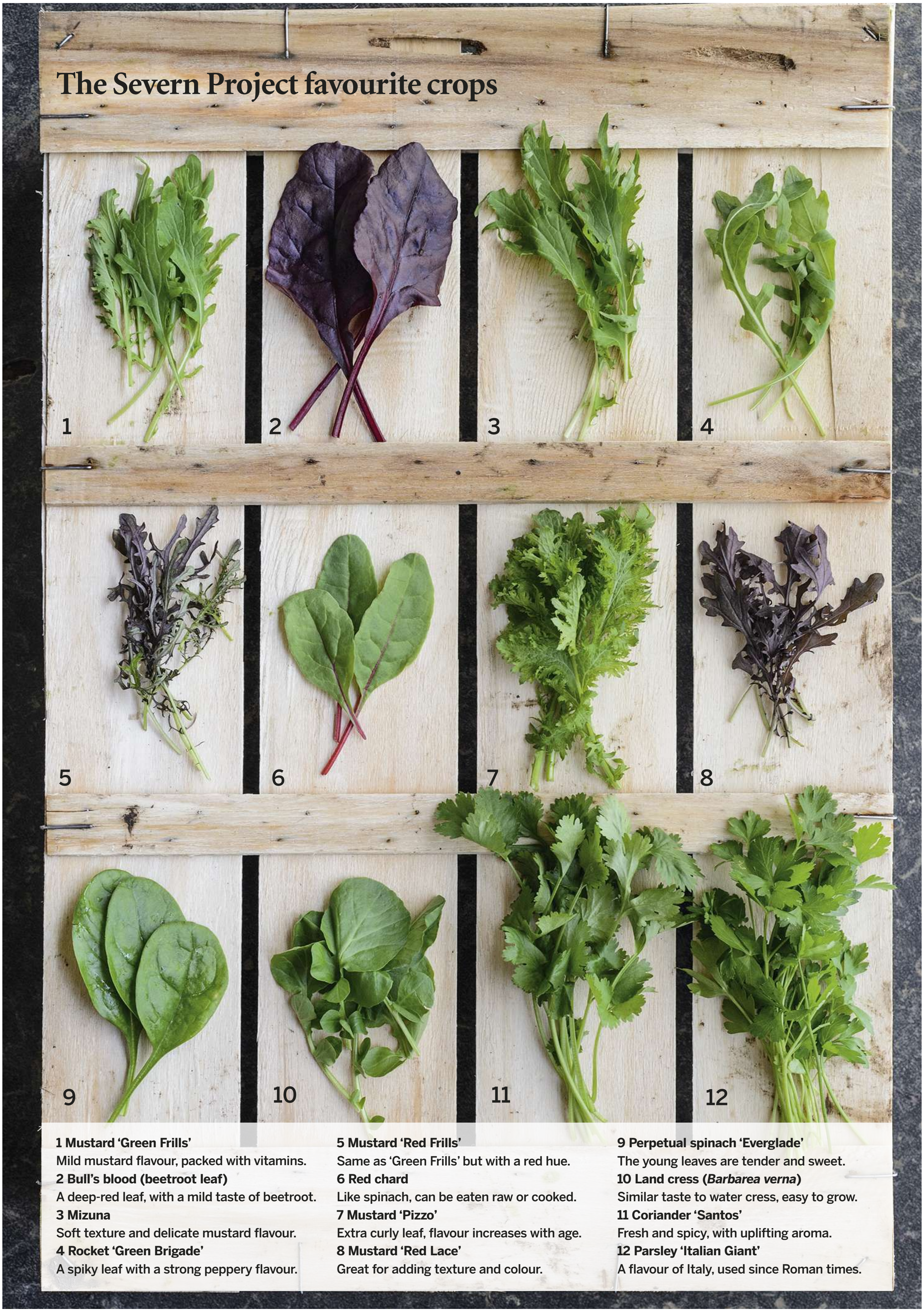
7

The Severn Project favourite crops



1 Mustard ‘Green Frills’
Mild mustard flavour, packed with vitamins.
2 Bull’s blood (beetroot leaf)
A deep-red leaf, with a mild taste of beetroot.
3 Mizuna
Soft texture and delicate mustard flavour.
4 Rocket ‘Green Brigade’
A spiky leaf with a strong peppery flavour.

5 Mustard ‘Red Frills’
Same as ‘Green Frills’ but with a red hue.
6 Red chard
Like spinach, can be eaten raw or cooked.
7 Mustard ‘Pizzo’
Extra curly leaf, flavour increases with age.
8 Mustard ‘Red Lace’
Great for adding texture and colour.

9 Perpetual spinach ‘Everglade’
The young leaves are tender and sweet.
10 Land cress (*Barbarea verna*)
Similar taste to water cress, easy to grow.
11 Coriander ‘Santos’
Fresh and spicy, with uplifting aroma.
12 Parsley ‘Italian Giant’
A flavour of Italy, used since Roman times.

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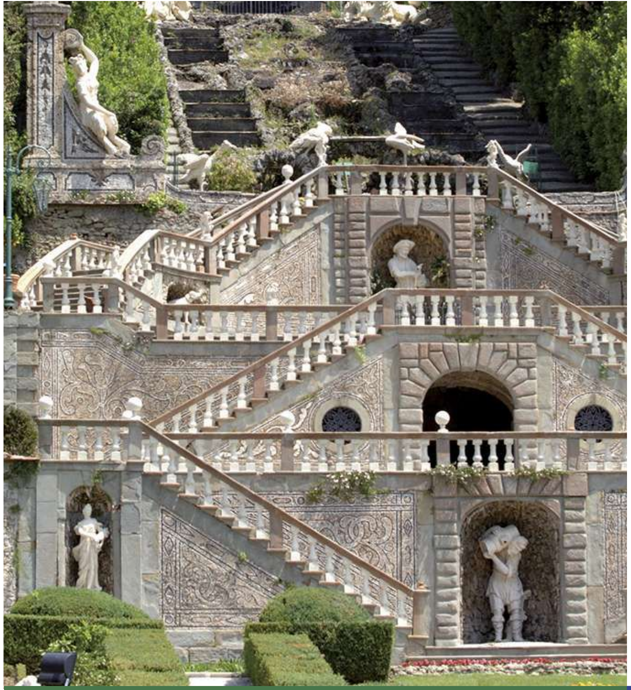

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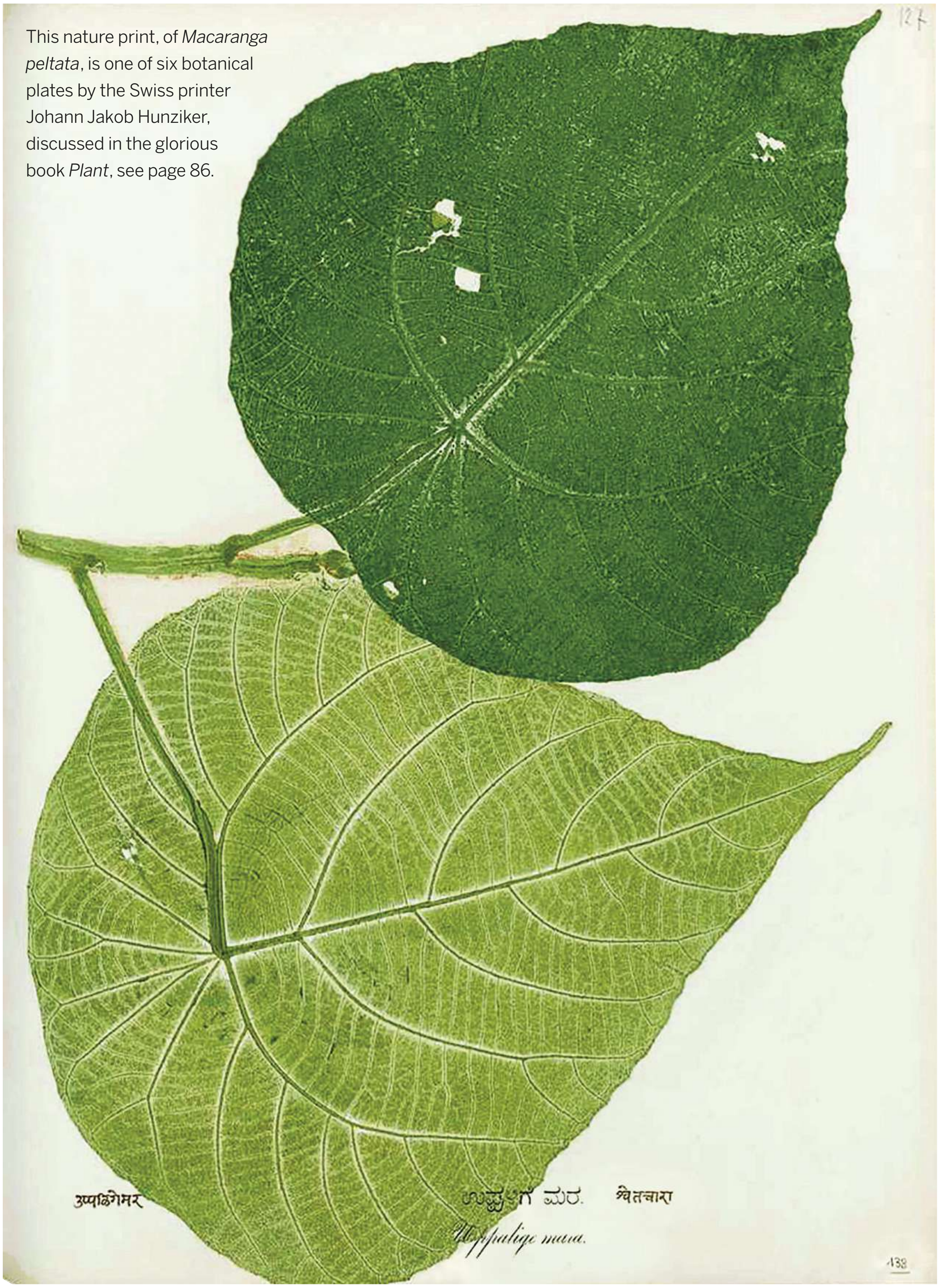
GARDENS ILLUSTRATED'S
BOOKS OF THE YEAR

Our favourite gardening reads from 2016


127
उप्पळिगेमर
ಉಪ್ಪಳಿಗೆ ಮರ.
श्वेतचारा
Uppalige mara.
138

This nature print, of *Macaranga peltata*, is one of six botanical plates by the Swiss printer Johann Jakob Hunziker, discussed in the glorious book *Plant*, see page 86.

PLANT (PAGE 76). SIX PLATES, FROM A *SERIES OF USEFUL AND ORNAMENTAL PLANTS OF THE SOUTH INDIA FLORA*, 1861,/BASEL MISSION ARCHIVES

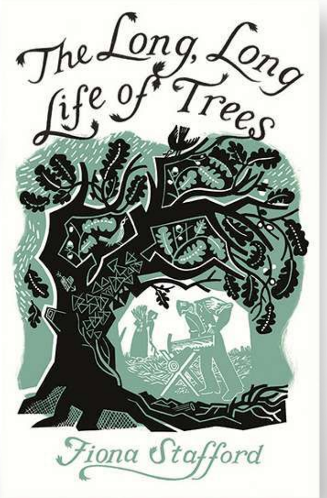
PLANT
EXPLORING THE BOTANICAL WORLD
PHAIDON

PLANT: EXPLORING THE BOTANICAL WORLD

By Phaidon editors
Phaidon, £39.95
ISBN 978-0714871486

Books showcasing botanical art are often arranged in chronological order, starting perhaps with the gorgeous lilies of the Santorini fresco (about 1500BC) working through to the dazzling array of plant portraits from the Renaissance onwards. You'll find all these in *Plant*, but, as the publisher explains, the artworks 'have been arranged in pairs to highlight interesting comparisons and contrasts'.

Reviewed by Anna Pavord in the November 2016 issue

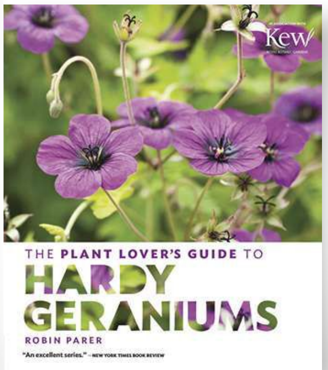

The Long, Long Life of Trees
Fiona Stafford

THE LONG, LONG LIFE OF TREES

By Fiona Stafford
Yale University Press, £16.99
ISBN 978-0300207330

A book that instantly enriches your experience of the natural world, overlaying the trees around you in myth, poetry and hidden meaning. The author Fiona Stafford, professor of English at the University of Oxford, has chosen 17 of the most common trees and presents an incredibly thorough and engaging exploration of each. This is a real treasure of a book, which has clearly sprung from a great many years of fascination with trees.

Reviewed by Lia Leendertz in the September 2016 issue

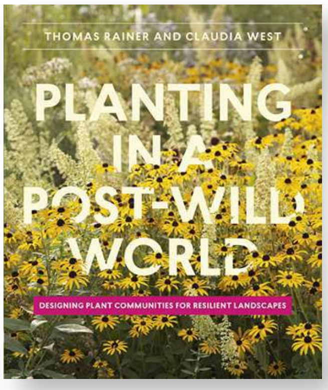

Kew
THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO
HARDY GERANIUMS
ROBIN PARER
"An excellent series." —NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO HARDY GERANIUMS

By Robin Parer
Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604694185

Robin Parer, a Californian nurserywoman who specialises in hardy geraniums, separates out those suited to the rock garden, to shade and for border use. Each picture is accompanied by information, such as hardiness zone, the size, light requirements, propagation and its uses in garden design. Each plant's origin – vital information that is often hard to extract – is also covered and Parer has done an excellent job here.

Reviewed by Val Bourne in the July 2016 issue

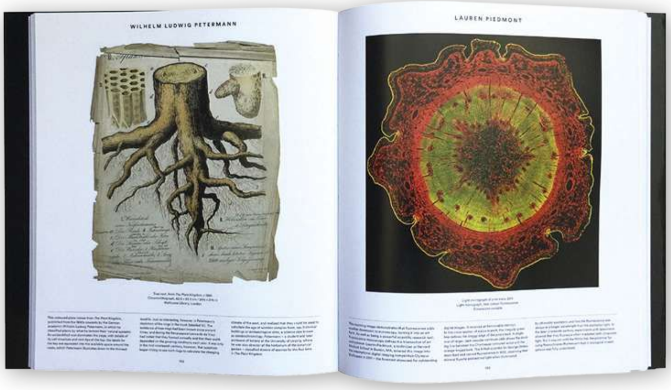

THOMAS RAINER AND CLAUDIA WEST
PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD
DESIGNING PLANT COMMUNITIES FOR RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD

By Thomas Rainer and Claudia West
Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978-1604695533

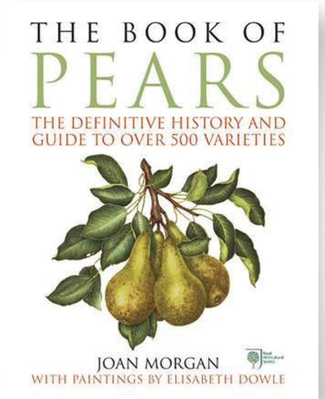
Two of the leading voices in ecological landscape design set out to celebrate and explain how planting design that recreates and reworks natural plant communities can 'create landscapes that are resilient, beautiful and diverse'. The concepts are explained clearly with well-illustrated examples. Rainer's lyrical, passionate and persuasive writing could convince even the most sceptical that it's the right thing to do.

Reviewed by Sarah Price in the February 2016 issue


WILHELM LUDWIG PETERMANN
LAUREN PIEDMONT

Plant: Exploring The Botanical World

Planting in a Post-Wild World

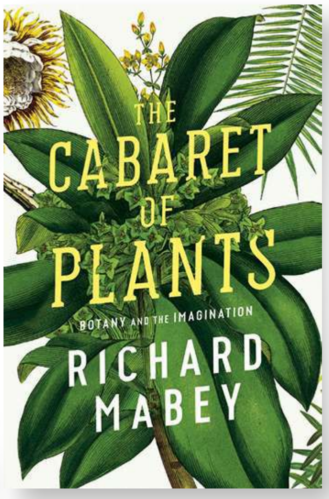

THE BOOK OF
PEARS
THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY AND GUIDE TO OVER 500 VARIETIES
JOAN MORGAN
WITH PAINTINGS BY ELISABETH DOWLE

THE BOOK OF PEARS

By Joan Morgan
Illustrations by Elisabeth Dowle
Ebury Press, £45
ISBN 978-1785031472

Each of the 40 full-page plates of pear cultivars, painted by botanical illustrator Elisabeth Dowle, depict one pear cultivar: in blossom; unripe and growing on the tree; ripe and picked; and in cross section. It would be hard to get a more thorough sense of the pear in question without biting into it. Talking of which, tasting notes sit alongside the historical, geographical and horticultural detail of each cultivar. You will know all there is to know.

Reviewed by Lia Leendertz in the January 2016 issue

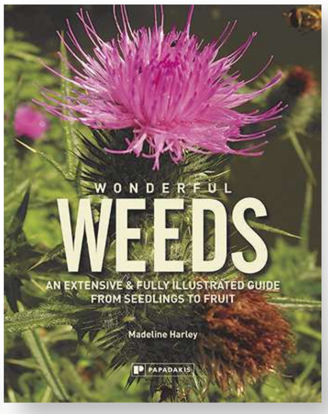

THE
CABARET
OF
PLANTS
BOTANY AND THE IMAGINATION
RICHARD
MABEY

THE CABARET OF PLANTS

By Richard Mabey
Profile Books, £20
ISBN 978-1861976628

Mabey's mission is to recall the 'ancient wonder' that once haloed the kingdom of plants, in contrast to today's utilitarian stance that reduces vegetable life to a mere 'biological proletariat'. His range of reference is colossal, from Palaeolithic bone art to the latest research into plant intelligence that demonstrates plants can learn. Mabey is enthralling, funny and wise. His message is crucial: understanding plants as 'autonomous beings' is essential to their survival and our own.

Reviewed by Ambra Edwards in the February 2016 issue

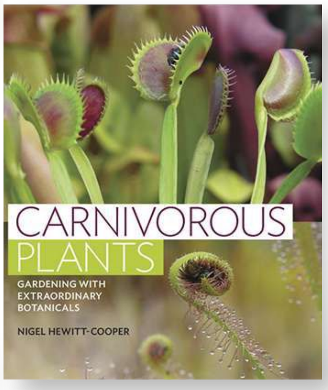

WONDERFUL
WEEDS
AN EXTENSIVE & FULLY ILLUSTRATED GUIDE FROM SEEDLINGS TO FRUIT
Madeline Harley
PAPADAKIS

WONDERFUL WEEDS

By Madeline Harley
Papadakis, £25
ISBN 978-1906506605

Few of us would choose a book on weeds as bedtime reading, but… this is not about weeding techniques, rather it teaches you how each plant spreads and where they thrive, which inevitably will help with control. It's an inclusive book that offers a clear glossary for novice gardeners and a useful description of each plant family, illustrated with photography. This should not put off experienced gardeners, though, as they too will find it hugely informative.

Reviewed by Caroline Beck in the August 2016 issue

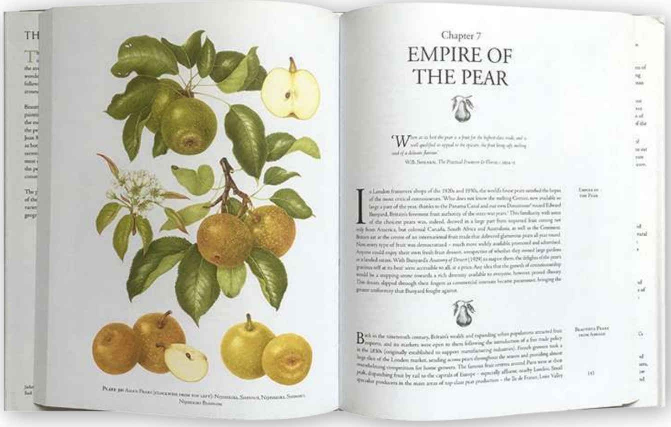

CARNIVOROUS
PLANTS
GARDENING WITH EXTRAORDINARY BOTANICALS
NIGEL HEWITT-COOPER

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

By Nigel Hewitt-Cooper
Timber Press, £18
ISBN 978-1604695793

Carnivorous plants are often a first introduction to gardening, not always with success. Buy this book alongside your early purchases and results will be transformed. Packed into its beautifully laid-out pages are concise practical instructions, mixed with innovative ideas and words of encouragement from Nigel Hewitt-Cooper, based on 35 years of accumulated knowledge, practical experience and enthusiasm. There seems to be little excuse not to grow them.

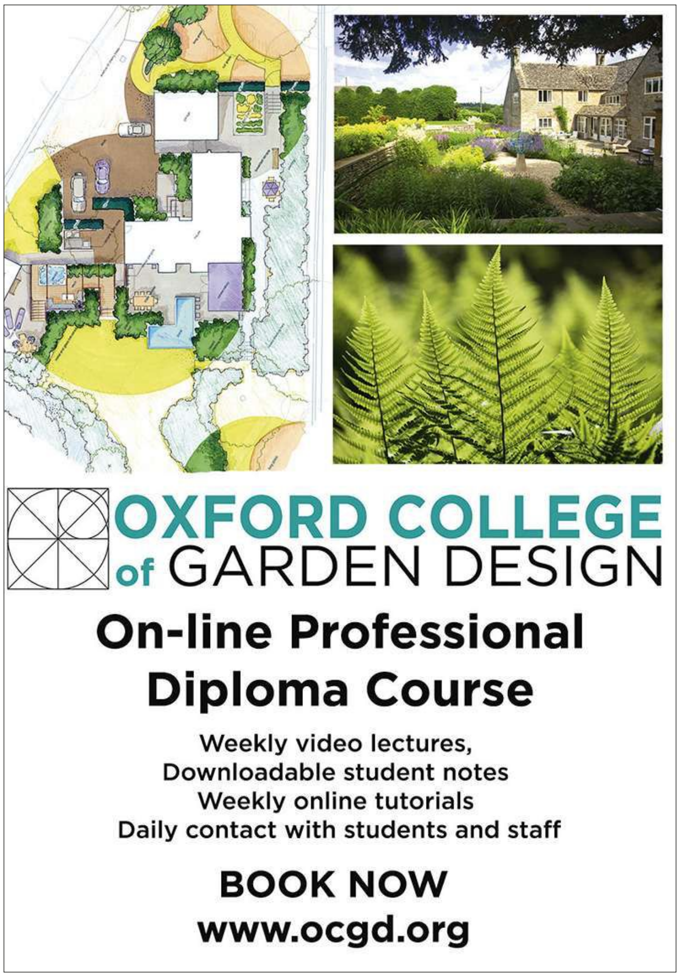
Reviewed by Matthew Biggs in the April 2016 issue


Chapter 7
EMPIRE OF
THE PEAR

The Book of Pears

ERICACEAE (Heather Family)
Rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum)

Wonderful Weeds



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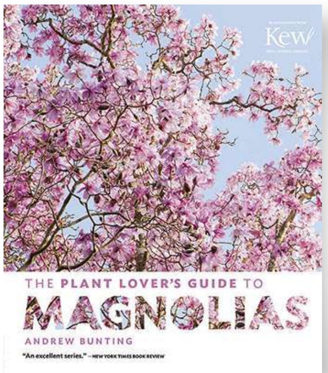
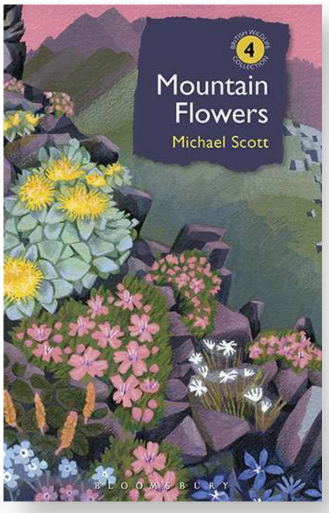

Kew
THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO
MAGNOLIAS
ANDREW BUNTING
"An excellent series." —NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO MAGNOLIAS

By Andrew Bunting
Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604695786

Andrew Bunting has spent a lifetime studying and discussing magnolias and this book offers an eye-catching distillation of his knowledge. Most of the book is given over to a compendium of 146 species and cultivars along with chapters outlining the genus from garden design and botanical perspectives. There are helpful lists of magnolias to suit different purposes, so that it should be quite easy to find a plant to suit.

Reviewed by Rory Dusoir
in the September 2016 issue

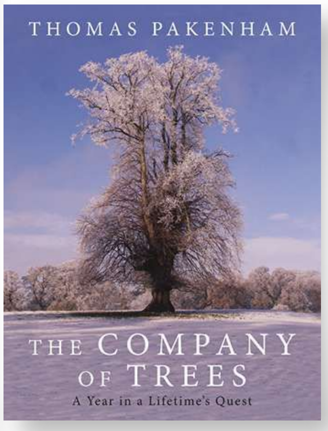

4
Mountain Flowers
Michael Scott
BLOOMSBURY

MOUNTAIN FLOWERS

By Michael Scott
Bloomsbury, £35
ISBN 978-1472929822

In this superb introduction to high-altitude plants, Michael Scott offers an overview of the origins of our mountain flora, describing the plants and summarising the main high-altitude regions where they can be found. This book wonderfully conveys the feeling that looking for alpine plants is one of the most exciting of all of the forays we can make into exploring Britain's wild plants; a great guide for the hill walker but also a good read for the armchair traveller.

Reviewed by Noël Kingsbury
in the September 2016 issue

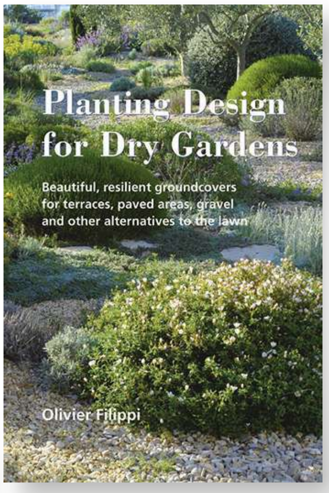

THOMAS PAKENHAM
THE COMPANY OF TREES
A Year in a Lifetime's Quest

THE COMPANY OF TREES: A YEAR IN A LIFETIME'S QUEST

Thomas Pakenham
Orion Books, £30
ISBN 978-02978666244

Written as a journal in a tone so natural you feel as if you're in Thomas Pakenham's study at Tullynally as the wind soughs through the woods. His hard-won knowledge, garnered over a lifetime of planting and observation, is displayed lightly so you absorb masses of information without feeling as though you're at a dendrology conference. Trees could not have a more compelling advocate.

Reviewed by Caroline Beck
in the February 2016 issue


Planting Design for Dry Gardens
Beautiful, resilient groundcovers for terraces, paved areas, gravel and other alternatives to the lawn
Olivier Filippi

PLANTING DESIGN FOR DRY GARDENS

By Olivier Filippi
Filbert Press, £35
ISBN 978-0993389207

For the past 30 years French nurseryman Olivier Filippi and his wife Clara have been growing and researching plants that are adapted to the poor soil and the hot, dry summers of their Mediterranean home. Filippi proposes flowering meadows, gravel gardens, green carpets (plants you can walk on) and flowering terraces as sustainable alternatives to lawns in areas with a Mediterranean climate.

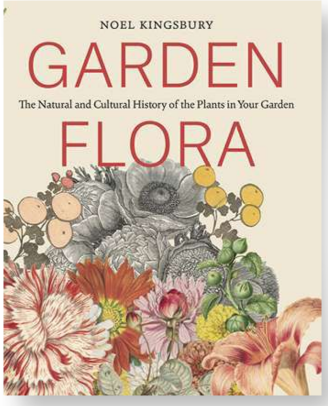
Reviewed by John Hoyland
in the March 2016 issue

Hills of the southern Highlands
chapter twelve
Glen Loch

Mountain Flowers

FLOWERING MEADOWS IN DRY CLIMATES

Planting Design for Dry Gardens

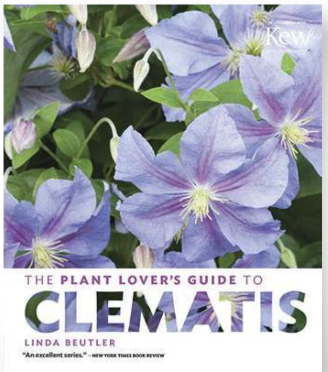

NOEL KINGSBURY
GARDEN
The Natural and Cultural History of the Plants in Your Garden
FLORA

GARDEN FLORA

By Noël Kingsbury
Timber Press, £29.99
ISBN 978-1604695656

The book's introduction provides an intensive course in the botanical terminology. But, this is not a book that requires systematic reading – you can dip into it a plant at a time, whenever you fancy discovering more about the origin and habitat of a favourite flower, or how it will grow in your garden. The descriptive terminology helps with plant choice. All in all, this book is richly illustrated and makes an interesting and informative read.

Reviewed by Stephanie Donaldson in the November 2016 issue

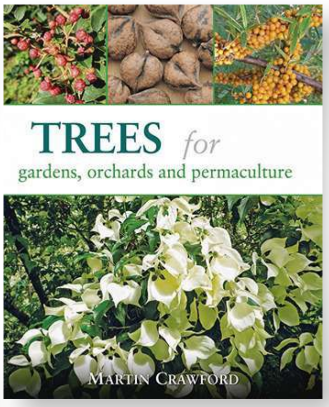

Kew
THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO
CLEMATIS
LINDA BEUTLER
"An excellent series." —NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO CLEMATIS

By Linda Beutler
Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604696592

Linda Beutler, the current president of the International Clematis Society, covers in detail how best to cultivate, propagate and prune clematis. The bulk of the book is a directory of 196 of the author's favourite clematis, a broad range covering old and new cultivars, herbaceous forms and species. Each entry is accompanied by a photograph and the main groups of the genus are described in a way that will appeal to the general gardener.

Reviewed by John Hoyland in the May 2016 issue

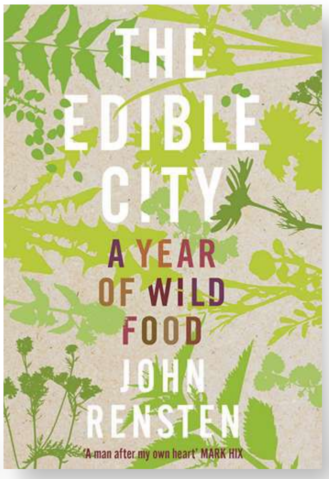


TREES FOR GARDENS, ORCHARDS AND PERMACULTURE

By Martin Crawford
Permanent Publication, £24.95
ISBN 978-1856232166

Crawford is one of the subject's leading authorities, well known for his extensive research into cultivars, pruning and maintenance. Here, he covers familiar nuts and fruit trees explaining expected yields, when to pick for taste and storage and how long produce will keep at different room temperatures. An invaluable reference book with an extensive list of suppliers in both the UK and USA.

Reviewed by Alys Fowler in the January 2016 issue



THE EDIBLE CITY

By John Rensten
Boxtree, £12.99
ISBN 978-0752266138

In this, his first book, John Rensten explains what to forage for and when, detailing the basics of plant ID, poisonous look-alikes, and even the dangers of dog poo and wee – a must when talking about foraging in urban parks. The book is set out in diary format and it gives an insight into Rensten's thoughts (and a touch of his family life), as he forages his way around British cities. A book that will appeal to urbanites and beyond.

Reviewed by Andy Hamilton in the November 2016 issue

Clematis
'Warszawska Nike'
Midnight Showers
plum, single

The Plant Lover's Guide to Clematis

HAZEL
Corylus avellana

AUGUST

30th August. Cody Dock, where the River Thames meets the River Lea

Today, with a million plus people heading to west London for Notting Hill Carnival, I found myself drawn in the opposite direction. I cycled to Victoria Park but, fuelled with coffee and sunshine, I didn't stop to look around. Instead I headed to the junction of the Thames and the much smaller River Lea, which starts life in the Chiltern Hills and winds south through the city until the two rivers meet, just below Cody Dock. I first discovered this place when I was asked to run a community walk here last year. Hidden behind some rather grotty-looking warehouses, this former industrial dock was abandoned for many years and remained neglected while all around it the East End was redeveloped. More recently, with a mixture of funding from the National Lottery and various other sources, it's been reopened and now has a riverside cafe, artists' workshops, studios and live/work spaces.

I wandered along the Lea, finding a few types of wild spinach that thrive in the summer months, then a patch of common mallow and some wild rocket. The river looked very dirty but the banks had obviously had a lot of love and money thrown at them recently, with a newly refurbished path, flower beds and long lines of quite manicured hedges. The last of these was what really interested me and I was delighted to find that they'd been planted with edible, not just decorative, species, the main 'ingredient' being hazel. Beating the squirrels to the hazelnuts in London is something of an art; too green and the nut is unformed and unpleasant, fully ripened and they will always pip you to the post. There is, however, a stage when the nut shells are still slightly green but have formed proper nuts inside; if harvested at this point you'll have crisp little nuts that taste like tiny avocados. Today, though, I was very lucky; this hedge had just been cut, possibly that morning, and its new haircut had revealed hundreds of ripe nuts which I gathered quickly, stuffing them into my bag with a mixture of guilt and nerves, feeling more like a jewel thief than a forager.

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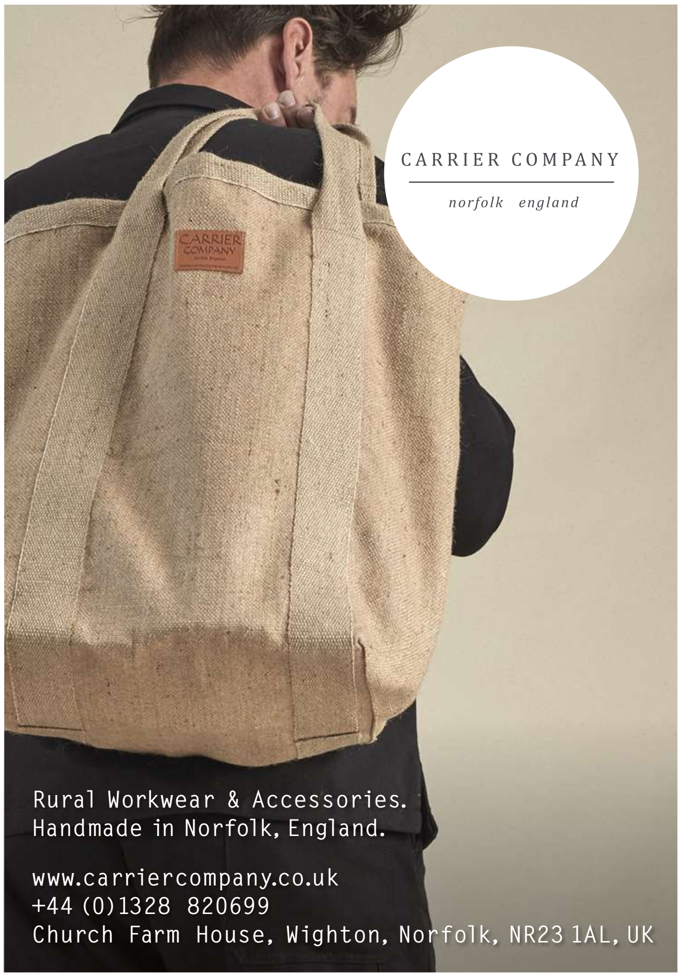

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ANNUAL GARDEN PLANNER

Gardens Illustrated is all about getting the most from your garden, and offers inspiration as well as practical advice. Part of that advice is introducing you to companies who can help make your gardening life easier – and this time of year is key to getting everything planned for the growing season ahead. Whether you are looking at redesigning your garden or tracking down new plants to bring a border to life, you can find solutions here.

Spring Summer Autumn Winter Plants Outdoor Wear Furniture Tools

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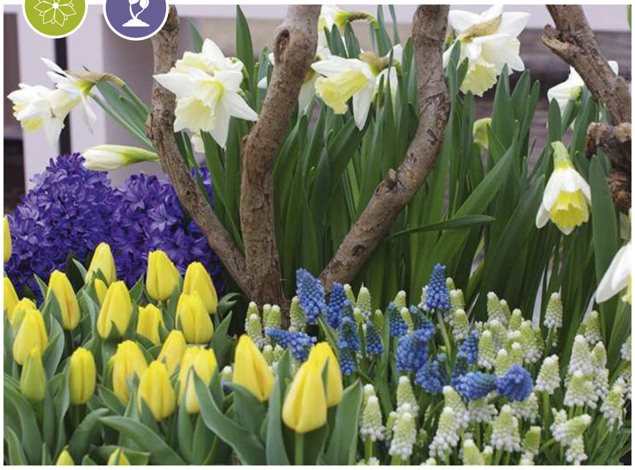

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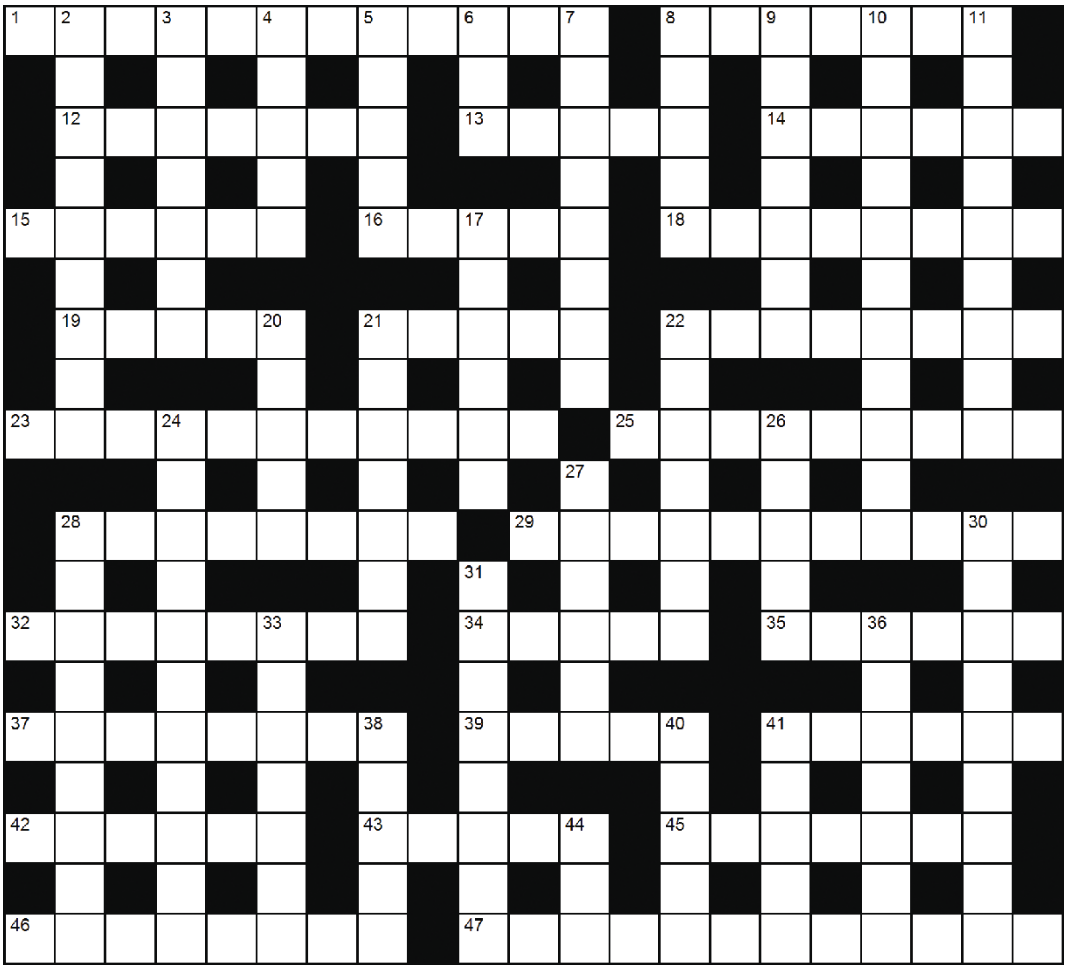

ACROSS

1 Insectivorous perennial from baseball player factory! (7,5)

8 A giant of a *Magnolia grandiflora* – in Mongolia, therefore (7)

12 Common name of *Verbena officinalis* – five in wild ravine (7)

13 Golden-flowering species of Peruvian lily in Dolgellau – really! (5)

14 *Prunus* fruit sort of tomato? (6)

15 A plant lacking in pigment – variety of abutilon Utah briefly disposed of (6)

16 Genus of succulents with star-shaped flowers used to change at start of month (5)

18 Aids seed badly affected by damping off, say (8)

19 Main shoots ending in flowers – in fancy mesembryanthemums (5)

21 Wooden gardening baskets – from towing boats circling river (5)

22 Yellow bearded iris for a US-style choir (4,4)

23 Genus of succulents such as house leek (11)

25 I contain a rambling tobacco plant (9)

28 Thistle-like flower or yellow resin snake (8)

29 Spiky-flowered exotic, genus *Callistemon* (6,5)

32 A yam Alec's mistaken for the genus of the plume poppy (8)

34 Eg impermeable membrane for a pond – cosmetic thing? (5)

35 Container that enhances root system – right out of eg Gatwick (3,3)

37 Common name for a white-flowered 16 across – awfully plain, etc (3,5)

39 Garden refuse? Narrow part of wasp, it's said (5)

41 Sliding window frames – from southern hardwood trees (6)

42 Floral decoration needs fresh water, hot! (6)

43 Breaks antirrhinums, briefly (5)

45 He moved earth for *Calluna vulgaris* (7)

46 Genus of false indigo – religiously immerse in water, almost, getting first class return (8)

47 One of Britain's rarest orchids worn by titled female? (5,7)

DOWN

2 A whorl of bracts at flower head's base, ruin clove, sadly (9)

3 Possibly iris-cum thistle genus (7)

4 *Rhododendron* cultivar hosted by gardener at Oxford (5)

5 Carnations petite relatives, good cut flowers – ps dark liquid inside (5)

6 An orchid genus from the Andes manifested in Shasta daisies (3)

7 *Heuchera* hybrid 'Italian dessert' – is it arum, possibly? (8)

8 A nectary is one such organ – in rising landscape (5)

9 Clay set off a tropical orchid genus (7)

10 Genus of shrubs in rose family, aka juneberry – odd name, Charlie (11)

11 Pantomime fool's colourful *Crocosmia* with yellow inner petals (9)

17 Carrot genus… initially develops an unusual colour unless shaded (6)

20 More tender rambling rose, right? (5)

21 Latin description of leaves with three lobes (7)

22 *Heuchera* with sparkling silver leaves – good bit of rubbish! (7)

24 Succulent, genus *Lithops*, resembling small stones (6,5)

26 Fragrant, white-flowering phlox in Rome garden (5)

27 Dogwood genus – grown for its colourful stems (6)

28 Monkey puzzle tree's genus – and famous crossword setter! (9)

30 Common name of the *Cotinus* (but not the tobacco plant!) (5,4)

31 Another name for dandelion – breath of fresh air at dinner dance (8)

33 Genus of NZ's kauri pine – in growbag a thistle! (7)

36 Fruit of a thorny shrub – got up cool and 'with it'! (7)

38 *Kalanchoe* with hanging, orange-red flowers – fantastic asset! (5)

40 Narcissus with long-cupped trumpet in Dorset hostelry (5)

41 Brief second to catch a garden pest (5)

44 Piece of turf, therefore, died (cut short) (3)

Where to buy

Recommended suppliers of the plants featured

Hopetoun (page 24)

- **Orchard Dene Nurseries**
  Tel 01491 575075,
  orcharddene.co.uk
  Wholesale only.

Dixter Exotics (page 44)

- **Architectural Plants**
  Tel 01798 879213,
  architecturalplants.com
- **Crûg Farm Plants**
  Tel 01248 670232,
  crug-farm.co.uk
- **Hardy Exotics Nursery**
  Tel 01736 740660,
  hardyexotics.co.uk
- **Pan-Global Plants**
  Tel 01452 741641,
  panglobalplants.com

Cutting garden (page 52)

- **Avondale Nursery**
  Tel 024 7667 3662,
  avondalenursery.co.uk
- **Beth Chatto Gardens**
  Tel 01206 822007,
  bethchatto.co.uk
- **Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden**
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- **Great Dixter**
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- **Monksilver Nursery**
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  monksilvernursery.co.uk

Succulents (page 66)

- **Blue Leaf Plants**
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  blueleafplants.co.uk

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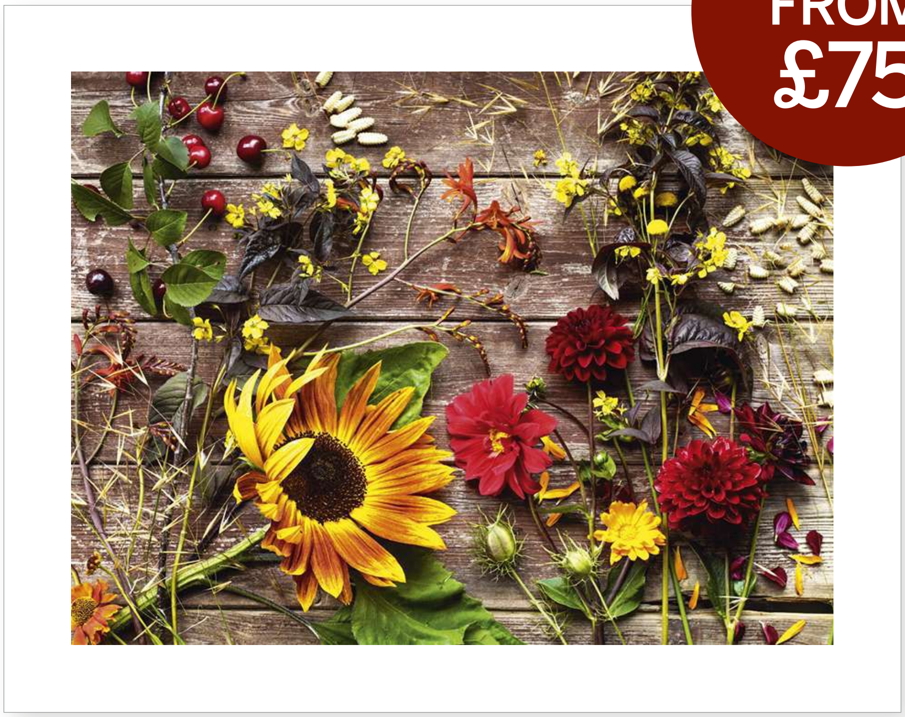

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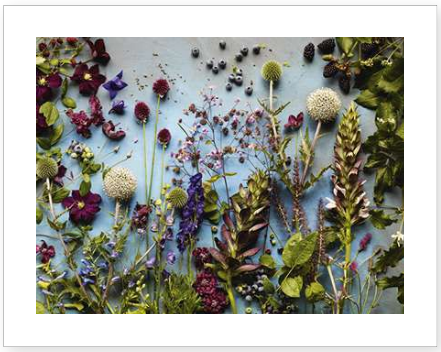

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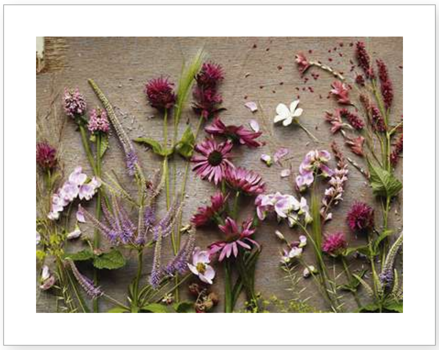

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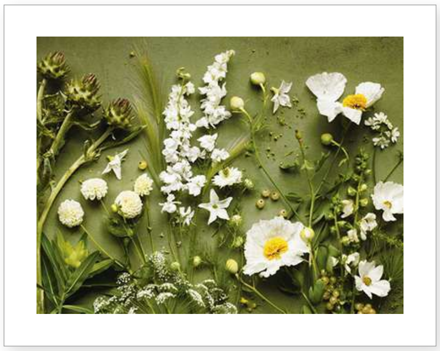

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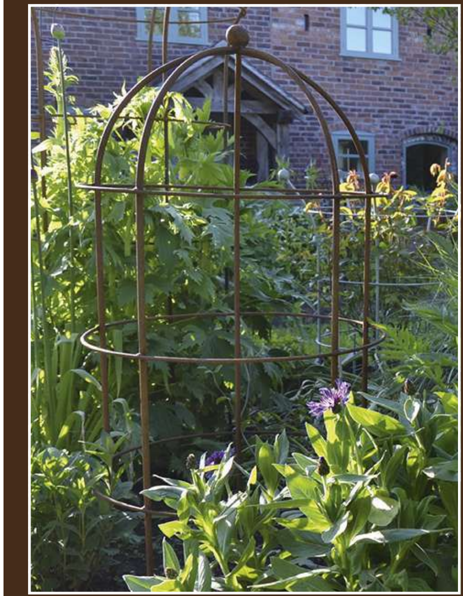

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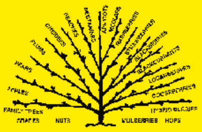
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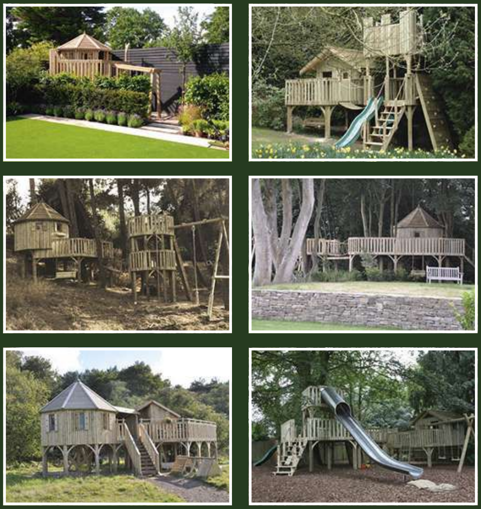

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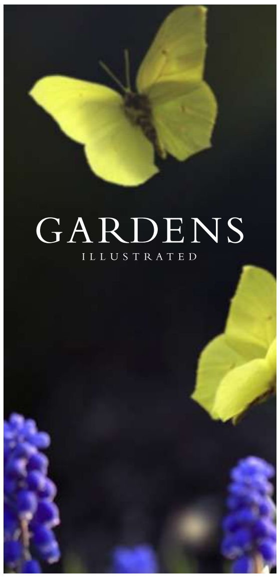
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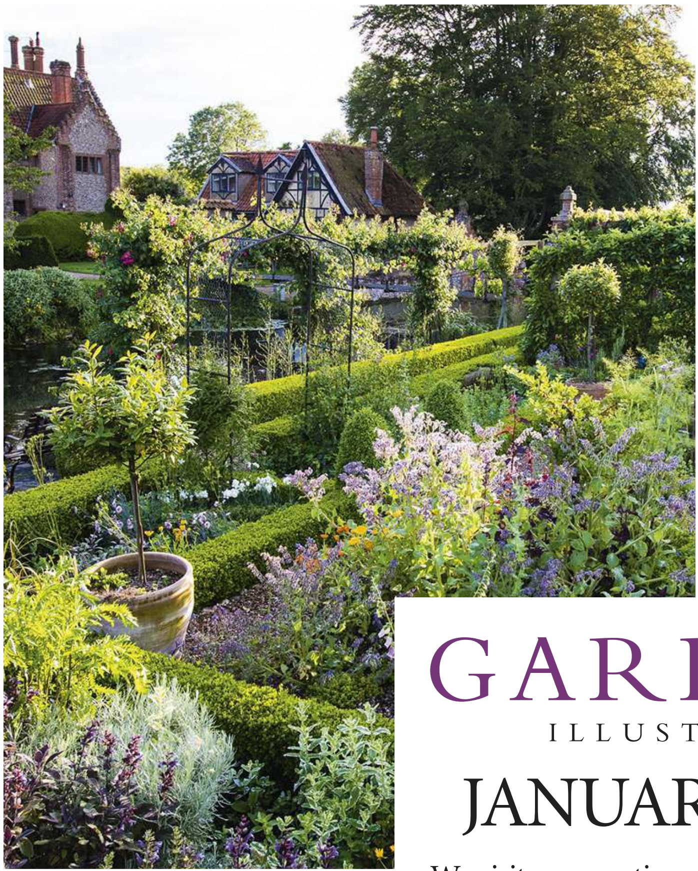

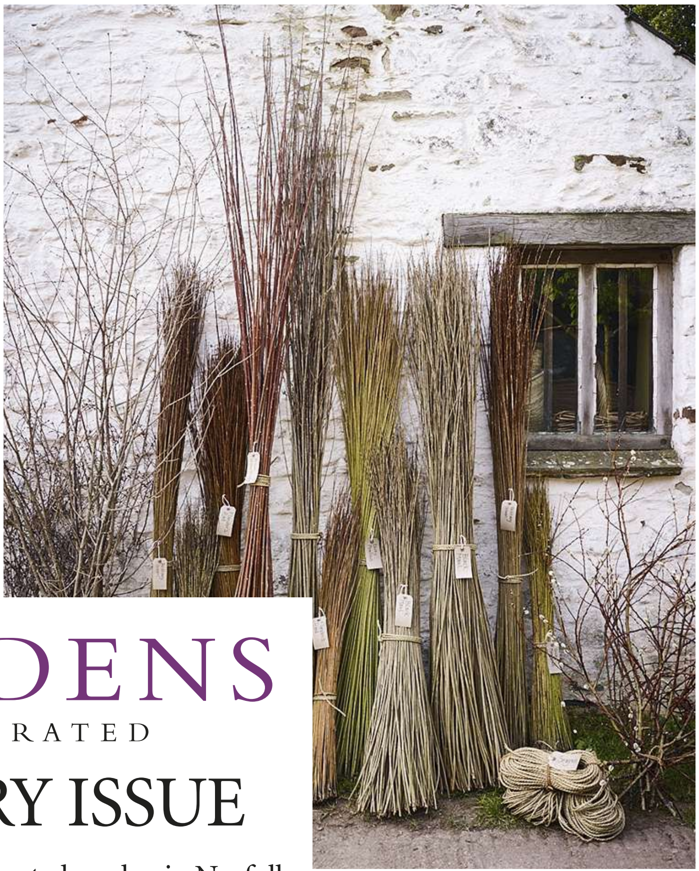

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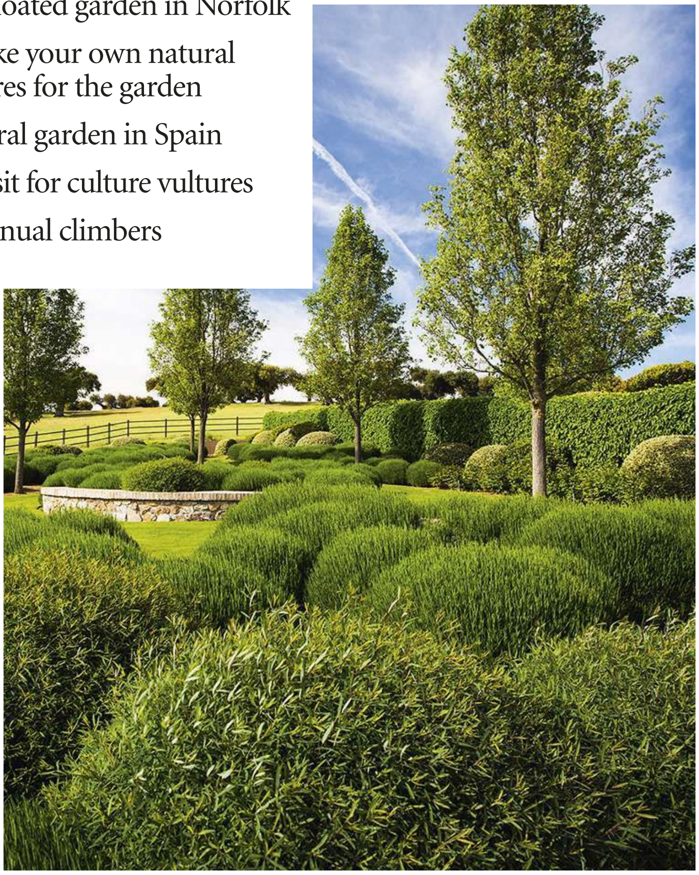

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Everything must go

Despondency quickly turns to joy as the closure of a much-loved nursery offers Frank the opportunity to explore its once forbidden outer reaches with cheque book in hand

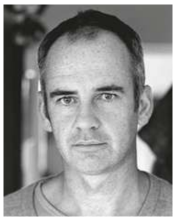
WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**

Succulents again. But bear with me now because this was the mother load. I know even that may not be good enough for some of you – for some reason our fat and spiky friends are the one subject that is guaranteed to elicit disagreeable correspondence. I can talk about conifers and rhododendrons and other supposedly controversial objects as much as I like without so much as a squeak from the dear readers, but cacti will needle you every time. React your worst: I am excited and there is a midwinter column to fill.

By happy chance our nearest nursery has been one called Desert Images. It was almost impossible to find, down a track past several Dead End signs and run by a very old and frail man whose prices had remained the same while the unsold succulents grew larger. I'd already bought most of the interesting stuff I wanted (all of the tree aloes), but periodically we'd return and fill the truck with cheap opuntias and agaves to populate an awkward spot, and ask yet again about the Not For Sale rarities and peer longingly into the No Entry tunnels.

Periodically we'd return and ask yet again about the Not For Sale rarities and peer longingly into the No Entry tunnels

The old man died and his widow tried to keep it going for a couple of months, but she was pretty frail too so it was no great surprise to find a Closed sign on the gate the other day. Sadness, however, was dissipated a moment later by the adjacent announcement of a Liquidation Sale. I had to stop myself drooling through the fence at the prospect of being set loose among the forbidden.



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

First thing on the first morning of the sale I was there to find fifty trucks already parked before me, which was a little disheartening, but in the scrum still managed to run around and tag all the things I wanted most. There was the mother plant of *Agave bracteosa* with all her pups still peering out from under her skirts. It is an unmistakable plant, in which all the leaves curl to make a candelabra of Js joined at the short end, decreasing to a centre that is more pineapple-top than spike. This particular specimen is almost twice the size given in the books, so may be a particularly good form.

The mothers also of both the mediopictas became mine. I've long loved *Agave americana* 'Mediopicta Alba' and there are several smaller ones both here and in England growing at an agonisingly slow rate. Now I've cut straight to a grand old plant and a line of freshly detached babies to boot. Larger, though less fecund, the gold form, *A. americana* 'Mediopicta Aurea' is not as striking, but makes good foil to her white sister across the path.

And I snagged the mother of the variegated form of *A. attenuata*, and an unusually nice dwarf form of *A. stricta*, and giant mothers of unknowable aloe hybrids, and that was only the first truckload on the first day.

The atmosphere was calmer on the second day, but the pickings still rich as we delved into lines of *Pachypodium* and columnar cacti. It would have been tempting to go back on the third day but, apart from the cheque book (they still use them here) needing a breather there was the danger of being overwhelmed by the glut of things waiting to be planted. Sometimes it is good to know when to stop and not turn into a fox in a henhouse.

And just as well because they are all planted now, and another part of the garden that was emptied by the drought is full again. And we have learned to make wire cages to line every hole before the plant is put in so the gophers can't eat their hearts out. There is an erroneous belief that gophers won't eat succulents, which may have come from lusher times when there were things other than succulents to eat. I would hate for any of these treasures to be scoffed from underground. They look almost as happy as I feel. □

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